NATION

Bihar police probe hints at NEET-UG paper leak

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Forex reserves touch fresh high at $655.8 billion

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

EURO 2024: Hosts batter overwhelmed Scots in record win

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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As summit ends, G7 nations commit to promoting IMEC

G7 reiterated commitment to a 'free & open Indo-Pacific'

BARI, 15 JUNE

The Group of Seven industrialised nations have committed to promoting concrete infrastructure initiatives such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) in the G7 Summit Communique issued at the end of the three-day G7 Summit, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Communique was issued on Friday after the customary "family photo" at the luxury resort of Borgo Egnazia, where the G7 also reiterated a commitment to a "free and open Indo-Pacific" based on the rule of law.

Modi attended G7 Summit at the invitation of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

"We will further promote concrete G7 PGII (Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment) initiatives, flagship projects, and complementary initiatives to develop transformative economic corridors for quality infrastructure and investment, such as the deepening of our coordination and financing for the Lobito Corridor, the Luzon Corridor, also building on the EU Global Gateway, the Great Green Wall Initiative, and the Mattei Plan for Africa launched by Italy," reads the communique. Billed as a path-breaking initiative, the IMEC envisages a vast road, railroad and shipping network among Saudi Arabia, India, the United States and Europe to ensure integration among Asia, the Middle East and the West.

The IMEC is also seen as an initiative by like-minded nations to gain strategic influence in the face of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which has faced increasing criticism over lack of transparency and disregard for sovereignty of the nations.

Among the other priorities of the summit's agenda, the communique registers "unwavering support" for Ukraine in its ongoing conflict with Russia.

It notes: The G7 will launch Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) Loans for Ukraine, in order to make available approximately USD 50 billion in additional funding to Ukraine by the end of the year.

Committed to working together: Trudeau to Modi

Amidst severe strain in bilateral ties, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that there was a commitment to work together with India to deal with some "very important issues" after he met Modi. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the G7 Summit, and is the first amid strained diplomatic relations over pro-Khalistani extremism after Trudeau alleged that Canadian authorities are "actively pursuing credible allegations" related to Indian government involvement in the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a designated terrorist. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

PM Narendra Modi attended G7 Summit at the invitation of Italian PM Giorgia Meloni ***PHOTO: PTI***

GOVT HIKES SALES TAX

Petrol, diesel get costlier by ₹3 and ₹3.5 in Karnataka

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Karnataka government on Saturday hiked sales tax on fuel which will make petrol and diesel costlier.

According to official sources, petrol will now go up by Rs 3 and diesel by Rs 3.5 per litre.

The new tax rates show an increase in sales tax on petrol from 25.92 per cent to 29.84 per cent and on diesel from 14.3 per cent to 18.4 per cent. This adjustment is intended to boost state revenue but is expected to affect various sectors by increasing transportation and goods distribution costs, which may ultimately impact consumers.

This notification shall come into force with immediate effect, it said.

The decision comes days after the Lok Sabha poll results, in which NDA got 19 out of 28 seats in Karnataka, with BJP winning 17 and JD(S) with 2. The ruling Congress in the State has won nine seats.

According to sources, the hike is expected to generate Rs 2,500-Rs 2,800 crore during the financial year. Hitting out at the government, BJP President BY Vijayendra urged the CM to roll back the hike in petrol and diesel prices, as he threatened a state wide protest by the party on Monday. Taking to X, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka lashed out at the Congress government's move to increase the price. He said, "This anti-people Congress government is going to take revenge for Kannadigas voting for BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. Having emptied the state coffers with unscientific guarantees of congress the government is going to fill the treasury by taxing the Kannadigas. Siddaramaiah government has issued an order to increase the tax on petrol and diesel, increasing the price of petrol to Rs 3 and diesel to Rs 3.50 in the state. The increase has cut into the public's pocket."

—*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

3 die as truck collides with car en-route to Goa

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Three people died on the spot and four were injured after a truck collided with a car on Bengaluru-Tirupati National Highway on Friday midnight. The deceased are 30-year-old Prajwal Reddy, 28-year-old Harshita and 2-year-old Nohan. The victims were en route to Goa from Bengaluru. The injured have been shifted to a private hospital in Davanagere for treatment. haramasagara police have initiated an investigation. —*Salar News*

2 die as car hits truck on B'luru to Mysuru highway

RAMANAGARA, 15 JUNE

Two students died while the driver of their SUV was seriously injured after the vehicle allegedly collided with a truck on Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway, police said on Saturday. The deceased have been identified as Vishwa,22, and Surya,18, both of them hailed from Bommasandra in Bengaluru, they said. According to the police, the two students were returning from Mysuru in the SUV which was being driven by one Suhas. Their vehicle allegedly collided with a truck which was in the wrong lane, resulting in an accident on Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway near Kempainadoddi village in Ramanagara here on Friday night. Both Surya and Vishwa were rushed to the nearest hospital where they were declared brought dead. The car driver, Suhas, who sustained severe injuries. —*PTI*

PM to release ₹20,000 cr for farmers on 18 June

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit his parliamentary constituency Varanasi on 18 June for the first time after assuming office for a third consecutive term, during which he will release the 17th installment of PM-KISAN scheme amounting to over Rs 20,000 crore for 9.26 crore beneficiary farmers across the country. Modi will also confer certificates to more than 30,000 members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) who have been trained as 'Krishi Sakhis' to work as para-extension workers, supporting fellow farmers with agricultural practices. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan highlighted the government's commitment to the agriculture sector. "Agriculture has always been a priority for the Prime Minister in his last two tenures. —*PTI*

THE DAY OF ARAFAT

Muslim pilgrims gather to worship at the top of the rocky hill known as the Mountain of Mercy, on the Plain of Arafat, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, near Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday. The ritual at Mount Arafat is considered the peak of the Hajj. It's often the most memorable event for pilgrims, who stand shoulder to shoulder, asking God for mercy, blessings, prosperity and good health ***PHOTO: AP***

Fire engulfs building near Biren's bungalow

NARAYANPUR, 15 JUNE

A major fire broke out at an abandoned building near the Manipur secretariat complex close to Chief Minister N Biren Singh's official bungalow here on Saturday evening, police said.

Three fire tenders were pressed into service and they put out the blaze within an hour, an official said.

No damage was caused to the chief minister's bungalow where security was tightened following the fire incident, officials said. The reason for the fire is yet to be ascertained, an official said.

Meanwhile, Manipur has remained gripped by recurring bouts of violence since ethnic clashes between Kuki and Meitei communities erupted on 3 May, 2023. Over 219 people have been killed in the violence.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside in the hill. A mob set on fire two trucks carrying construction materials in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Saturday, an official said.

Four trucks were stopped at Tronglaobi by locals who torched two of them while two others were saved by state and central forces.

—*PTI*

Smoke billows after a fire broke out at an building near Manipur CM Biren Singh's official bungalow, in Imphal on Saturday ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

14 killed as tempo skids & falls into river in U'khand

RUDRAPRAYAG, 15 JUNE

In an incident, 14 tourists were killed and 12 injured when a tempo traveller skidded off the road and fell into Alaknanda river on Badrinath national highway in Uttarakhand here on Saturday, officials said.

Garhwal Inspector General of Police KS Nagnyal said that the victims of the accident were tourists on the way to visit Chopta.

Nagnyal said 26 people were in the vehicle and most of them were residents of Delhi, the IG said.

On Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami's instructions, seven people seriously injured in the accident have been admitted to AIIMS, Rishikesh through heli-ambulance, while six others are being treated at Rudraprayag district hospital, he said.

District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said the accident happened around 11am, and police and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams rushed to the spot and started relief and rescue operations.

He said that the vehicle fell on the banks of Alaknanda river about 250 metres below the road.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the accident and termed it "heartbreaking".

Chief Minister Dhami expressed grief over the accident and ordered the district magistrate to investigate the incident. —*PTI*

A temp traveller skidded off the road and fell into a gorge in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Ch'garh: 8 Naxals, 1 STF jawan killed in encounter

NARAYANPUR, 15 JUNE

As many as eight Naxalites and a jawan of the Special Task Force (STF) were killed in an encounter in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Saturday, police said. Two other STF personnel sustained injuries in the incident, they said.

A huge cache of weapons and other materials belonging to Naxalites were recovered from the encounter site, they said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said his government is fully committed to eliminating Naxalites, and it will not sit quiet till it achieves the goal.

The gunfight broke out at around 7am in the forest of Abhujmad, where a joint team of security personnel from four districts — Narayanpur, Kanker, Dantewada and Kondagaon — was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range Sundarraj P said.

The operation was launched on 12 June based on information about the presence of cadres belonging to Maad division and PLGA company no. 1 of Maoists in forests of Kutul, Farsebeda and Kodtameta villages under Kohkameta police station area of the district, he said.

The exchange of fire broke out when security personnel were cordoning off the area, followed by intermittent firing till the afternoon in the forests of Kutul, Farsebeda and Kodtameta villages, he said.

After guns fell silent, bodies of eight Naxalites clad in a uniform were recovered from the site along with an Insas rifle, a .303 rifle, a barrel grenade launcher (BGL) and other weapons and Maoist-related materials, the official said. 131 Naxalites have been killed in separate encounters with security personnel in Bastar division and other districts, this year, police said. —*PTI*

NOW IN MADHYA PRADESH

11 houses razed after cops find beef in fridge

MANDLA, 15 JUN

Houses of 11 people were demolished in tribal-dominated Mandla in Madhya Pradesh as part of action against the illegal beef trade in the state, a police official said on Saturday.

The action was taken after a tip off was received that a large number of cows had been held captive for slaughter in Bhainwahi area in Nainpur, Mandla Superintendent of Police Rajat Saklecha told PTI.

"A team was rushed there and we found 150 cows tied in the backyards of the accused. Cow meat was recovered from the refrigerators in the homes of all the11 accused. We also found animal fat, cattle skin and bones, which were stuffed in a room," he said.

"The local government veterinarian has confirmed the seized meat is beef. We have also sent samples to Hyderabad for secondary DNA analysis. The houses of the11 accused were demolished as they were on government land," the SP said. The SP said an FIR was registered on Friday night following the recovery of the cows and beef, adding that one of the accused has been arrested while a hunt was on for the remaining 10.

"The 150 cows have been sent to a cattle shelter. Bhainswahi area had become a hub of cow smuggling for some time now. Cow slaughter is punishable with a jail term of seven years," Saklecha added.

Police sources said criminal history of two of the accused has been gathered and the process was on to find out about the antecedents of the remaining persons. All the accused are Muslims, they added.

—*PTI*

The action was taken after a tip off was received that a large number of cows had been held captive for slaughter ***PHOTO: PTI***

Doctor fined ₹30L for failing to detect foetal anomaly

HASSAN, 15 JUNE

District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has imposed a fine of Rs 30 lakh on City-based radiologist Dr KV Sujatha for committing malpractice by providing a false scan report of a pregnant woman. Pavithra BR, a resident of Hallikoppalu village in Aluru taluk, was undergoing prenatal treatment at Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwar Hospital. Her doctor, Dr Pratima Adarsh, recommended a prenatal anomaly scan, which was conducted by Dr Sujatha in KR Puram on 15 March, 2023. The scan report falsely indicated that there were no abnormalities, specifically mentioning that the baby did not have a cleft lip and that the eyes and nose were normal. *—Salar News*

Man succumbs to burn injuries after self-immolation

UTTARA KANNADA, 15 JUNE

A man from Uttara Kannada district succumbed to his burn injuries on Saturday after attempting self-immolation in front of Joida police station on 13 June. The death of Bhaskar Bondelkar, a resident of Hanuman Galli in Ramanagara village in Joida taluk, has sparked outrage, with allegations of sustained police harassment leading to the death. Bondelkar had filed a complaint against PSI Basavaraj of Ramanagara police station. After allegedly facing harassment from the PSI, Bondelkar relocated from Ramanagara to Joida. The situation escalated when Bondelkar's father-in-law, Ganapati, received a notice from police regarding a land dispute. Believing police were targeting his family, Bondelkar confronted officers at Ramanagara police station. *—Salar News*

BBMP removes 3,843 illegal flex banners in 3 days

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

BBMP has removed 3,843 illegal banners/flex/hoardings for violations with 48 FIRs filed and Rs 75,000 charged in total for penalties from Thursday to Saturday in the City. In Mahadevapura alone 2,002 illegal banners were removed and RR Nagar topped in total penalties (Rs 50,000), according to the data released by BBMP on Saturday. On Friday, 47 banners were removed in Bengaluru East with 1 FIR filed; 13 banners were removed in the West with 8 FIRs lodged and 17 banners were removed in the South. As many as 43 banners were removed from RR Nagar, 50 in Dasarahalli with 2 FIRs filed, 41 in Mahadevapura with 5 FIRs filed and 104 banners removed in Yelahanka with 13 FIRs filed. *—Salar News*

Cops launch digital literacy training for elderly

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

The City police along with Nightingales medical trust in bid to educate the senior citizens on digital cyber literacy held a training programme for senior citizens on Saturday.The first session was held on Saturday to observe world elders abuse awareness day. The joint project was launched by the two organisations under the elder's helpline initiative to enhance the digital literacy and cyber knowledge of the elderly citizens.The aim of the program was to equip the senior citizens with the knowledge of the digital and online world as the senior citizens have now started using technologies more and are prone to online frauds. The program was by Bengaluru city police commissioner B Dayananda and Siddheshwara N, director of Karnataka department differently abled and senior citizens. The elder's helpline initiative was launched in 2002 for wellbeing of the senior citizens and to protect them from abuse. *—Salar News*

BSY RETURNS, TO APPEAR BEFORE CID ON 17 JUNE

BSY returned a day after HC had restrained CID from arresting him

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Karnataka BJP leader and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa who returned to Bengaluru on Saturday, a day after the High Court stayed a non-bailable warrant against said that the ongoing Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) case against him caused "necessary confusion" and that he will face the court on 17 July.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru on arriving at the airport here today, he said, "I went to Delhi as part of a scheduled programme. I have already informed that I would come for trial on the 17th of this month.

High Court has also issued an injunction. I am going to the trial on Monday. I am not complaining to anyone. Time will decide everything. People know what the truth is. Those who are doing tricks, the people will teach them a lesson," he said. On Friday, High Court issued an order stating that coercive proceedings of arrest and detention will be kept on hold until the next date of hearing.

The order of the High Court followed a letter from the petitioner (Yediyurappa) volunteering to appear before police on 17 June.

A Bengaluru court had on Thursday issued a non-bailable warrant against Yediyurappa directing his immediate arrest in connection with sexual assault against a minor girl under the POCSO Act, which deals with sexual assault cases against minors. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said, "They(Karnataka government) themselves requested the court to issue a non-bailable warrant...They tried to misinterpret the case...High Court slapped the non-bailable warrant issued...It was a conspiracy by the Congress government in Karnataka and they should apologise to the public." *—ANI*

Never indulged in vindictive politics: CM on BSY case

MYSURU, 15 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said he and his government have never indulged in "vindictive politics" and will not do it in the future too, and accused BJP of indulging in such practices.

He was reacting to the BJP and JD(S), accusing the Congress government led by him of indulging in vindictive politics, following the arrest warrant against former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa in a POCSO case.

JD(S) leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy has alleged that Congress government in the state was now targeting the Yediyurappa family, after targeting former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's family.

Speaking to reporters here, Siddaramaiah asked, "When they (BJP) booked cases against us, was it not targeting? Against me, against DK Shivakumar (Deputy Chief Minister), Rahul Gandhi (Congress leader) cases were booked, what should that be called? They had cancelled Rahul Gandhi's membership (of Lok Sabha). What should that be called?".

"Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been sent to jail. Should that be called hate politics or love politics? It is they who indulge in vindictive politics. We will never do vindictive politics..... I have not done it so far. I have not come to politics yesterday or today. It (vindictive politics) is BJP's job," he said.

Asked whether eight MPs from South India being made union ministers was part of a larger plan by Modi to expand BJP in the South, Siddaramaiah said, no matter what they do, people in South India won't support the BJP, because it is "RSS' political face mask." *—PTI*

CM calls for NEET re-examination

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

PHOTO: SALAR

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has called for a re-examination of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), citing unfair treatment of students in the recent exams. "Many students have been assigned ranks that do not reflect their hard work, which is a great injustice," he said.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, Siddaramaiah said, "Grace marks should not be given to pass students. Granting grace marks is a bad practice that should be avoided. I have already made my statement in this regard." He further added, "I have demanded an investigation into this matter and called for a re-examination.

DKS urges Centre to scrap NEET, allow own entrance tests to states

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday urged the Centre to scrap the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and allow states to conduct their own entrance tests.

"Injustice is being meted out to the students from Karnataka. Karnataka has built colleges, but it is benefitting students from North India and depriving its own students. We have to fight unitedly against this. The Centre must conduct an inquiry into the NEET exam irregularities also," he said.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, regarding the NEET exam, said there has been injustice to students who have worked hard.

"There has to be a probe about it, and a re-exam has to be done. National Testing Agency (NTA) has not conducted the exams properly. Giving grace marks is not a good practice, no one should be passed by giving grace marks," he said.

The NTA has come under criticism amid allegations of irregularities and inflation of marks in the medical entrance exam. To a question regarding City civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) polls, Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress Chief said elections will be announced soon and there is a need to prepare the party for that. *—PTI/ Salar News*

Court extends custody of actor Darshan till 20 June

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Darshan, Gowda and others will continue to be in police custody till 20 June PHOTO: SALAR

A court on Saturday extended the police custody of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa along with his friend Pavithra Gowda and eleven others, who are accused in connection with the Renukaswamy murder case, by five more days.

They were produced before the court as their six-day police custody will end on Sunday.

As the court would be shut on Sundays and Monday (Bakrid) -- a public holiday, the police decided to produce them before Judge Vishwanath C Goudar.

With this, Darshan, Gowda and others will continue to be in police custody till 20 June.

The advocates of Darshan and others requested the court to send them to judicial custody. However, the investigation team requested the court that crucial evidence and equipment used to torture the deceased needs to be recovered and hence extend the police custody.

Meanwhile, a delegation of Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) on Saturday visited the family of Renukaswamy and handed them Rs 5 lakh as compensation.

Actor Darshan, popularly known as 'Challenging Star', and 12 of his close associates were arrested on June 12 for the murder of the 33-year-old fan of the actor. "We have gone to convey our condolences personally and also to tell the family how apologetic the industry is about what happened to Renukaswamy. We also told them that we will stand with them in future too," said NM Suresh, President of KFCC. *—PTI*

Darshan's fan clout hyped up, says Divya Spandana

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Divya Spandana PHOTO: PTI

Three days after the arrest of actor Darshan, barring a couple of reactions, the Kannada film fraternity is still hesitant to either condemn publicly or come in support of the star.

In the resounding silence, actor-producer-policitian Ramya aka Divya Spandana's stance on the murder accused, calling him a 'habitual offender', reverberates louder.

In a recent interview to a television channel on the influence Darshan holds, Ramya claimed that the clout being attributed to him is overrated. "In the past he did, but I don't think he does anymore the way we are hyping him up. For example, he campaigned for a couple of candidates in the last election and all of them lost. So, I don't think, just because you see people standing outside the police station, it doesn't mean he has that kind of clout," she added. She also said Darshan is notorious for having "rowdy elements" as fans, therefore grabbing all the attention.

Meanwhile, actor Sanjjana Galrani is going to town with her support to the star claiming that he is just an accused, not the culprit. To a YouTube channel, Galrani claimed that when she learnt about the arrest via Instagram, she felt extremely shocked. She called June 12 "a black day" for the Kannada film industry. *—PTI*

IN DHARWAD

Protest erupts near police stn over attack on Hindu activist

DHARWAD, 15 JUNE

The incident has sparked outrage among activists PHOTO: SALAR

A protest erupted in front of Suburban police station in Dharwad on Friday evening, following an attack on Somasekhara Chennashetty, a pro-Hindu activist. Chennashetty, known for rescuing cows and protecting reptiles and animals, was assaulted near the old APMC in Dharwad city while attempting to rescue a cow.

The incident has sparked outrage among activists, who allege that Chennashetty was targeted by a group involved in illegal cattle slaughter.

The attack, carried out by 50-60 individuals, left Chennashetty severely injured, including a serious ear injury, necessitating his hospitalisation.

BJP leaders and members, led by Arvind Bellad, Deputy Leader of Opposition in Assembly, gathered at the suburban police station demanding action against the assailants. Bellad said, "Today another tragedy happened in peaceful Dharwad. Some individuals were ready to slaughter cows, violating the regulations that only allowed the slaughter of aged cattle. Somasekhara Chennashetty, who protects animals and treats them, was attacked by a group led by a man running a slaughterhouse."

Protesters withdrew from the station after Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner Renuka Sukumar assured swift action.

"There was a commotion between two groups over the cattle issue, and we have received a complaint about an attack. We have filed an FIR against 20 people. We have accessed CCTV footage and it will aid in our investigation." *—Salar News*

B'LURU-MYSURU EXPRESSWAY RECORDS DIP IN ACCIDENTS

MYSURU, 15 JUNE

Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, which was once notorious for accidents, has recorded a 56 per cent reduction in accidents due to strict adherence to traffic rules and the installation of AI-powered cameras along the highway.

The expressway recorded only 125 accidents from January to May this year compared to 288 registered in the corresponding period last year. While there were 100 fatalities and 301 people suffered injuries from January to May last year, this year saw only 31 deaths and injuries to 167 people.

The expressway witnessed a surge in road accidents and the public cited hasty construction and inauguration ahead of Assembly elections as the reason for it. ADGP of State Traffic and Road Safety Department spearheaded Alok Kumar an investigation into the accident caused on the expressway. It was decided that installing surveillance cameras alongside the road would help curb accidents effectively.

Over 74,000 traffic violations were recorded by these cameras as in just 28 days after their installation in May.

Violations such as failure to wear seat belts, speeding, lane infractions, and non-compliance among heavy vehicles including KSRTC buses were captured through camera footage.

Primarily, driver negligence was found to be at fault and online notices were issued to all violators. *—Salar News*

New tourism policy will attract investments: DKS

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

DK Shivakumar PHOTO: ANI

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said that the State was planning to come out with a new tourism policy to attract investments into the industry, on Saturday.

Speaking at the event 'Dakshin Bharat Utsav' jointly organised by Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Karnataka Tourism Department, he said, "A good tourism policy will be able to attract industrialists and investments. When industrialists do well, the government gets more revenue, more jobs are created for the people and the industry grows."

"There are many representatives from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Telangana. I request them to share their experiences. Karnataka is looking to develop its 300-km long coastline. Bengaluru can become a tourist hub besides being the IT capital," he added.

He said the government will also be inviting new tenders for a sky deck (an observation deck) in Bengaluru.

"Cubbon Park and Lal Bagh were traditional tourist places in Bengaluru. In order to create new tourist spots for new generation of people, we have planned a sky deck in Bengaluru. We will be inviting new tenders for the sky deck in the next 8-10 days," he said.

The GST of 18 per cent is killing the tourism industry. If businesses lose more than half the money to taxes, they will not be motivated enough to invest more.

He urged the investors and industrialists in the tourism industry to submit their demands in writing to the government. *—Salar News*

FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS

Civic workers demand better pay and work conditions

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

PHOTO: SALAR

Karnataka State Poura Karmikas and Safai Karmacharies Workers' Union and Domestic Workers' Unions have urged State government to merge them into BBMP as lakhs of them are working for BBMP as contract workers without any job security.

Despite writing 96 recommendation letters to the government about their poor salaries and living conditions no action has been taken yet, civic workers said at a press conference here on Saturday. "Nobody cares about the Pourakarmikas and the government is not doing justice to the workers. After 9 months since the new government took over, we still do not have a solution," said AM Subrarayadu, the president of the union.

There are 1.04 lakh people working as Pourakarmika in the City and 4,800 of the workers died due to health issues, the union said.

Sashikala, member of the union, said, "We had been receiving Rs 2,000 as a bonus for 8 months but in the last month it was not given. I earn 10,000 per month as a domestic worker and it is tough to take care of my two kids with this money. There is no job security, no social security and no payments during emergencies."

In July 2022, the Karnataka government agreed in writing to regularise services of all direct payments and daily wages. They also agreed to bring the workers from contract payment to the direct payment system yet these contract workers have not given the wages as promised.

Despite government guidelines, the employees said their work conditions are inhumane and their living conditions are also poor without any healthcare facilities. N Nagaraj, BM Nagar District President, said, "The children of these workers are living in slums and in bad conditions. The work timings are odd and the workers are looked down upon and shunned by the society."

The union has decided to stage a protest at Freedom Park here on 19 June to raise their demands. *—Salar News*

WILL FULFILL PM'S SEMICONDUCTOR INITIATIVES: HDK

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's semiconductor-related initiatives, Union Heavy Industries and Steel Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Saturday said he will work towards fulfilling them through his ministry. His remark comes a day after he reportedly raised questions about the US-based semiconductor manufacturer potentially receiving Rs 3.2 crore subsidy for every job it creates in Gujarat. Later, addressing reporters here, the JD(S) leader stressed on the need for creating more jobs along with attracting investments to the country. "Why has our PM given me this big portfolio? Why he has confidence in me? It is a big responsibility that the PM has given me. My work is to bring investors in a big way. Not only bringing investors, parallelly, we have to create more jobs. By creating more jobs, I have to come to the expectations of him," he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@PSTamangGolay

Suresh Gopi calls Indira Gandhi 'mother of India'

THRISSUR, 15 JUNE

Union Minister Suresh Gopi on Wednesday described former prime minister Indira Gandhi as the "mother of India" and late Congress chief minister K Karunakaran as a "courageous administrator". He also called Karnuakaran and Marxist veteran EK Nayanar as his "political gurus". Gopi was speaking to reporters after visiting the memorial of Karunakaran, "Murali Mandiram" located in Punkunnam here. Interestingly, Gopi had won Thrissur Lok Sabha constituency by dashing the hopes of Karunakaran's son and Congress leader K Muraleedharan. Urging reporters not to add any political connotation to his visit to Karunakaran memorial, the BJP leader said he came here to pay his respects to his "guru". *—PTI*

Bibhav's custody extended till 22 June

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

A court here on Saturday extended till 22 June the judicial custody of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar. Kumar is accused of assaulting AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on 13 May at the chief minister's official residence. Kumar was produced through video conferencing before the duty metropolitan magistrate, who extended the custody and directed the Delhi Police to produce him on 22 June. Earlier on Friday, the court had extended Kumar's custody by one day after noting that the investigating officer (IO) was not present. Kumar was arrested on 18 May. He was sent to police custody for five days the same day by a magisterial court, which observed that his anticipatory bail plea had become infructuous because of his arrest. *—PTI*

Illegal structures at ex-Andhra CM home demolished

HYDERABAD, 15 JUNE

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) on Saturday demolished certain structures on pavement adjacent to the Lotus Pond residence of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy here. The demolition works were carried out 10 days after Reddy stepped down as chief minister of the neighbouring state. According to a senior official of GHMC, the civic authorities removed the structures abutting the compound wall to carry out tiling work on the pavement at Jagan's residence. The structures were being used by security personnel, he said. An earthmover was used to remove the structures. *—PTI*

NC, PDP oppose UAPA prosecution against Arundhati

SRINAGAR, 15 JUNE

The National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party have expressed their disapproval of the prosecution sanction against author Arundhati Roy and a former professor in Kashmir under the stringent UAPA for allegedly making provocative speeches at an event in Delhi in 2010. According to officials, the FIR was registered following the orders of the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, New Delhi Expressing disapproval of the move, the National Conference (NC) stressed the need to uphold the fundamental right of every citizen to free speech as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Constitution. The NC said this prosecution would serve no purpose except perhaps to show that the "hardline stance of BJP or Union Government won't change despite the electoral setback they recently faced". *—PTI*

PM, Kishida agree to advance ties at G7

Amid China's aggressive behaviour in Indo-Pacific, PM calls for stronger India-Japan ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Bari, Italy on Friday; Modi with US President Joe Biden; Modi with Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau; Modi with the King of Jordan Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein **PHOTO: PTI**

BARI, 15 JUNE

Strong ties between India and Japan are important for a peaceful, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said as he met his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida in Italy where the two leaders expressed a wish to advance bilateral ties across various sectors.

The Prime Minister, who was on a day-long visit to Apulia, southern Italy on Friday to address the Outreach session on day two of the three-day G7 Summit, met Kishida after addressing the multilateral gathering on the topic of Artificial Intelligence, Energy, Africa and the Mediterranean.

- In a read out of the meeting, the Ministry of External Affairs said the Prime Minister thanked the Japanese counterpart for his congratulatory wishes on his re-election and affirmed that bilateral ties will continue

"Strong ties between India and Japan are important for a peaceful, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific," Modi said in a social media statement following his talks with Kishida.

His comments came amidst China's aggressive behaviour in the region as well as its efforts to expand its influence.

"Our nations look forward to working together in defence, technology, semiconductors, clean energy and digital technology. We also wish to advance ties in infrastructure and cultural linkages," he said.

In a read out of the meeting, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the Prime Minister thanked the Japanese counterpart for his congratulatory wishes on his re-election and affirmed that bilateral ties will continue to receive priority in his third term.

"The two leaders noted that the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership is in its 10th year and expressed satisfaction at the progress made in the relationship. They discussed ways to deepen cooperation further, adding new and emerging areas, and strengthening B2B and P2P cooperation," reads the MEA statement.

"India and Japan are collaborating on several important areas including the landmark Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project that will usher in the next stage in mobility in India, the targeted 5 trillion yen worth of Japanese investment in India in 2022-2027 period, and India-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership aimed at transformation of our manufacturing cooperation. The meeting between the two Prime Ministers provided an opportunity to review some of these ongoing works of cooperation," it noted. *—PTI*

Hello from Melodi team: Italian PM in video with Modi

BARI, 15 JUNE

"Hi friends, from #Melodi", this is how Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni captioned a small selfie video showing her camaraderie with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two leaders met on Friday towards the end of Prime Minister Modi's day-long visit to Apulia, southern Italy, during which he thanked the Italian Prime Minister for the invitation to attend the G7 Summit. This was his first foreign visit after assuming charge for a historic third term as the prime minister.

Modi re-shared the video and wrote, "Long live India-Italy friendship!". Earlier on Saturday, a selfie of the two leaders at the G7 Summit went viral. In December last year, the two leaders had clicked a selfie on the sidelines of the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai.

- In December last year, the two leaders had clicked a selfie on the sidelines of the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai

Sharing the picture, Meloni wrote in the caption, "Good friends at COP28, #Melodi." During their bilateral talks here on Friday, the two leaders reviewed the progress of the bilateral strategic partnership and agreed to strengthen cooperation in global fora and multilateral initiatives, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

"We discussed ways to further cement India-Italy relations in areas like commerce, energy, defence, telecom and more," he said. *—PTI*

BJP forms 4 member panel to probe WB poll violence

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 15 JUNE

BJP President JP Nadda on Saturday formed a four-member committee to look into the alleged political violence in West Bengal, as the party accused West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC Supremo Mamata Banerjee of remaining a mute spectator.

The committee includes Biplab Kumar Deb, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Brij Lal and Kavita Patidar, all BJP MPs, with Deb as its convener. In a jibe at the saffron camp, TMC spokesperson and former Rajya Sabha MP Santanu Sen said BJP is now hunting for excuses after being rejected by the people of West Bengal in Lok Sabha polls. Of the 42 Lok Sabha seats, TMC won 29, BJP 12 and Congress 1. A BJP statement said, "Banerjee remains a mute spectator, while criminals of her party attack and intimidate opposition workers and voters with impunity. Even the Calcutta High Court has taken note of these excesses and extended deployment of CAPF till 21 June and has listed the matter for hearing on 18 June." BJP said Lok Sabha elections were held across the country and no instance of political violence was reported from anywhere except West Bengal. "It continues to be in the vice grip of post-poll violence, the kind we saw post-2021 assembly elections," BJP alleged.

In response to the allegation, the TMC leader said BJP candidates had "described polls as free and fair. But after the dismal show, they are now inventing excuses and weaving false narratives of post-poll violence". *—PTI*

HC asks Cong leaders to remove posts against Rajat

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The Delhi High Court has ordered removal of social media posts by Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Pawan Khera and Ragini Nayak alleging that veteran journalist Rajat Sharma used "abusive language" during his show on the Lok Sabha election result day. The court said an irreparable loss and injury would be caused to the plaintiff's reputation if the videos and posts on X were allowed to remain in the public domain.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna said it is prima facie evident from the footage of the TV debate played in the court that plaintiff Sharma had "barely intervened for a few seconds and no abusive language was used" against Nayak. *—PTI*

'Nitish brought shame to Bihar by touching PM's feet'

BHAGALPUR, 15 JUNE

Political strategist turned activist Prashant Kishor charged Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with having "touched the feet" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure his own continuance in power.

Kishor, who has been running the 'Jan Suraaj' campaign, was addressing a public meeting in Bhagalpur on Friday.

"People ask me why I am now criticising Nitish Kumar, having worked with him in the past. He was a different man back then. His conscience had not been put up for sale," said Kishor, who had managed the JD (U) president's election campaign in 2015 and formally joined the party two years later. "The leader of a state is the pride of its people. But Nitish Kumar brought shame to Bihar when he touched the feet of Modi," he alleged, referring to the NDA meeting in Delhi last week. Kumar's JD (U) won 12 seats in Lok Sabha polls to emerge as the second largest ally of the BJP, which failed to get a majority on its own.

Prashant Kishor **PHOTO: PTI**

> **People ask me why I am now criticising Nitish Kumar, having worked with him in the past. He was a different man back then. His conscience had not been put up for sale**
>
> —Prashant Kishor, Political strategist turned activist

"There is so much talk about Nitish playing a key role in Modi's return to power. But how is the Bihar Chief Minister leveraging his position? He is not using his clout to ensure benefits for the state. He is touching feet to ensure that he remains in power, with BJP support, even after 2025 assembly polls," Kishor said.

Notably, Kishor had first shot into fame in 2014 for handling the spectacularly successful Lok Sabha poll campaign of Modi. *—PTI*

Arunachal, Odisha CMs allocate portfolios to newly inducted ministers

ITANAGAR, 15 JUNE

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday distributed portfolios among his council of ministers, with his Deputy Chowna Mein getting Finance and Mama Natung Home.

Deputy Chief Minister will look after Finance, Planning and Investment departments besides, Tax & Excise, State Lotteries, Economics & Statistics, Power and Non-Conventional Energy Resources.

The important Home portfolio was allocated to Mama Natung, besides Inter-state Border Affairs, Public Health Engineering & Water Supply and Department of Indigenous Affairs.

Khandu will look after all the departments not assigned to the deputy chief minister and other cabinet ministers.

Meanwhile, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday allocated portfolios to his council of ministers, keeping home, finance and several other departments to himself, according to an order issued by the Raj Bhavan.

Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, who alone has the experience of working as a minister, was given the charge of agriculture and farmers' empowerment and energy departments.The other deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, a debutant MLA and the lone female in the 16-member council of ministers, has been assigned women and child development, Mission Shakti and tourism departments.

Majhi was sworn in as the state's first BJP chief minister here on 12 June. *—PTI*

Delete recording of excise case court proceedings: HC to Kejri's wife

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The Delhi High Court on Saturday directed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal to take down a video recording of court proceedings related to the excise policy case from social media platforms.

In the video, Kejriwal, is seen addressing a trial court.

A bench of justices Neena Bansal Krishna and Amit Sharma issued notices to six people, including Sunita Kejriwal, and social media intermediaries X, Meta and YouTube on a petition alleging violation of the video conferencing (VC) rules of the Delhi High Court. The High Court also directed the social media intermediaries to take down similar content if it is brought to their notice that it has been re-posted.

The court passed an ex-parte ad-interim order and listed the matter for further hearing on 9 July while restraining the parties from re-posting the content.

Delhi CM and AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita Kejriwal **PHOTO: PTI**

"The order be communicated to them within 48 hours. Service be also effected through ordinary and electronic mode," the bench said and asked the petitioner to serve the unserved respondents. According to the Rules, there shall be no unauthorised recording of the proceedings by any person or entity.

The video was allegedly re-posted by Sunita and the others. *—PTI*

Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray **PHOTO: PTI**

WILL NOT TAKE BACK REBELS: UDDHAV, SHARAD

MUMBAI, 15 JUNE

Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray and NCP (SP) Supremo Sharad Pawar on Saturday said there was no question of taking back those leaders who had deserted the two parties.

The Shiv Sena split in June 2022 after a rebellion by Eknath Shinde, who went on to become Maharashtra chief minister, while the Nationalist Congress Party broke into two factions after Ajit Pawar joined the state government along with eight MLAs in July last year.

During the first press conference of the MVA after Lok Sabha results were announced on June 4, both Thackeray and Sharad Pawar categorically said "there is no question of taking rebel leaders back".

In the just concluded Lok Sabha polls, Parner MLA Nilesh Lanke had switched from the Ajit Pawar faction to the one headed by Sharad Pawar and won from Ahmednagar defeating sitting BJP MP Sujay Vikhe Patil.

Similarly, Bajrang Sonawane also left the Ajit Pawar-led NCP and contested the Lok Sabha polls from Beed on an NCP (SP) ticket. In Maharashtra, which has 48 Lok Sabha seats, the Congress led with 13 wins, followed by nine for the Shiv Sena (UBT) and eight for the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP). *—PTI*

'MONOPOLIES SHOULDN'T BE CREATED'

Govt must ensure corporate takeovers are fair: Cong

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Congress on Saturday said it is the government's responsibility to ensure that competition among corporates is not stifled, oligopolies or monopolies do not emerge and corporate takeovers are free and fair.

It is also the government's responsibility to ensure that undue advantage arising out of access to political power is not exercised, party general secretary Jairam Ramesh said. His comments came after the Adani Group acquired Penna Cements while strengthening its share in the cement sector in southern India.

Ramesh said that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that undue advantage arising out of access to political power is not exercised **PHOTO: PTI**

- His comments came after the Adani Group acquired Penna Cements while strengthening its share in the cement sector in southern India

"Aap chronology samajhiye (understand the chronology): September 2022: Adani acquires Ambuja Cements and ACC, to become country's second largest cement player. August 2023: Adani acquires Sanghi Industries, India's largest single-location cement unit. June 2024: Adani acquires Penna Cements, giving it substantial market share even in the last remaining region of South India." he said.

"Upcoming: Adani is exploring the acquisition of Saurashtra Cement, Vadraj Cement, and the cement business of Jaiprakash Associates," Ramesh claimed on X. Quoting former RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya, he said the noted financial economist had established that the five big conglomerates, including the Adani Group, are building monopolies in 40 sectors, including in the cement sector. "This growing monopolisation is linked to India's shaky economic growth, unemployment crisis, and high inflation. In 2015, when a common man used to spend Rs 100 on goods, Rs 18 would go as profit to the business owner- in 2021, the owner now gets Rs 36 in profits," Ramesh claimed. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

3 sisters among 4 found dead in Gujarat apartment

SURAT, 15 JUNE

A 58-year-old woman, her two sisters, and her brother-in-law were found dead in an apartment in Gujarat's Surat city on Saturday, police said. Prima facie, they have died due to asphyxiation as the gas-powered geyser was left running. But the exact cause of death is yet to be ascertained, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) RP Barot said. The police were informed about the bodies around 9am, he said. Bodies of the flat owner, Jasuben Vadhel, her sisters Shantaben Vadhel,53, and Gauriben Mevad,55, and Gauriben's husband Hirabhai,60, were found in the apartment, the official said. "Jasuben's son went to check on them around 8am and found them lying unconscious and informed the police. *—PTI*

Young farmer trampled to death by elephant in TN

ERODE, 15 JUNE

A young farmer was trampled to death by a wild elephant early on Saturday in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve STR in the district. According to forest officials, the incident occurred when Venkatachalam,25, of Sujilkuttai area in Bhavanisagar forest Range under STR region had gone to his farmland on Friday night to guard his crops from wild animals. Around 1am on Saturday, the elephant entered the farm and started destroying and eating Pumpkin crops. When Venkatachalam attempted to drive off the jumbo, it attacked him, resulting in his spot death. Upon hearing the cries of Venkatachalam, the residents rushed to the spot and chased away the elephant from there. The injured man was shifted to Hospital in, where tdoctors declared him dead.*—PTI*

Death toll in Nagpur factory blast rises to 8

NAGPUR, 15 JUNE

The death toll in the blast at an explosives factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district reached eight on Saturday after another worker succumbed to her injuries at a private hospital, an official said. Shraddha Vanraj Patil,22, who was undergoing treatment in Nagpur city, succumbed to her injuries, Dr Pinak Dande, director of Dande Hospital, told PTI. Another injured worker, Pramod Chavare, is undergoing treatment. With this, eight workers, including six women and two men, have lost their lives due to the explosion that occurred on Thursday. The blast occurred around 1pm on Thursday at the factory in Dhamna village under Hingna police station limits, *—PTI*

12kg heroin smuggled from Pak seized in Rajasthan

JAIPUR, 15 JUNE

Security forces on Saturday seized 12kg heroin while it was being smuggled into Rajasthan's Anupgarh district from Pakistan using drones, police said. The estimated value of the heroin is Rs 60 crore, they said. Two consignments of heroin weighing 6 kg each were recovered from Anupgarh and Sameja Kothi police station areas of the district by the Border Security Force (BSF) and police while they were being smuggled from Pakistan using drones, the police said. In the Anupgarh police station area, BSF jawans opened fire after hearing the sound of a drone in 13 K village near Kailash post this morning, they said. During a joint search, BSF jawans and police personnel found two packets of heroin weighing 6kg. The value of the consignment is estimated to be Rs 30 crore, they added.*—PTI*

Bihar police probe hints at NEET UG paper leak

The probe team found partially burnt question papers in exam centre

PATNA, 15 JUNE

Economic Offences Unit (EOU) in Bihar probing the allegations of a paper leak in NEET) claimed that its investigation has revealed evidence of a paper leak.

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) was held on 5 May.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan denied allegations of a paper leak. He had also said that apart from issues faced in just six centres out of roughly 4,500, NEET was conducted satisfactorily across the country.

However, the reports suggested that the National Testing Agency (NTA had stalled the EOU investigations for around a month by not providing information sought by its officials.

Around 13 people were arrested in the alleged medical entrance exam paper leak, but the non-cooperation of the NTA jeopardised further probe.

In their statements, suspects said candidates paid exorbitant prices of over Rs 30 lakh in exchange for the leaked papers.On Saturday, the agency issued notices to 11 candidates asking them to arrive at their Patna office with evidence for questioning their association with the 'solver gang'. All the candidates were from different districts of Bihar and were asked to arrive on Monday and Tuesday.

The EOU found the partially burnt question papers in booklet number 6136488, whose contents were the same as that of the NEET (UG) 2024 paper.

Police use water cannons to disperse the KSU activists during their protest march against NEET results, in T'puram, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

DMK blames NTA over NEET, slams BJP for being 'spectator'

Chennai, 15 June

Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK on Saturday accused the National Testing Agency of spoiling the sanctity of NEET and blamed the BJP-led government at the Centre for being a 'spectator' and backing coaching centres that earned in crores. Yet again, the DMK sought scrapping the national test, saying it alone would protect the sanctity of education sector. *—PTI*

Five people, including the principal and teacher of a school in Godhra town in Gujarat's Panchmahal, were arrested for allegedly trying to help 27 candidates clear the NEET-UG for a sum of Rs 10 lakh each, police said. *—PTI*

PLEA IN SC SEEKS SCRAPPING OF NEET-UG EXAM

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking scrapping of the NEET-UG 2024 exam and an apex court-monitored probe by the CBI or any other independent agency into the alleged irregularities in the test held on 5 May.

The petition, filed by 20 students who had appeared for the medical entrance exam, has also sought a direction to the National Testing Agency (NTA) and others to conduct the test afresh.While hearing separate petitions raising grievances over the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate)-2024, the apex court on Friday had sought responses from the Centre and the NTA on a plea for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into allegations of question paper leak and other irregularities in the exam. The fresh plea stated that in view of "rampant irregularities and fraudulent practices", re-examination would only help in short-listing deserving students to get admission in medical institutions. *—PTI*

IIT-Kharagpur student found dead in '22 was shot, stabbed

KOLKATA, 15 JUNE

IIT Kharagpur student from Assam Faizan Ahmed, whose decomposed body was found in a hostel room two years ago, "might have been hit by an object and shot at", a court-appointed forensic expert said on Saturday.

An examination of footage of the body revealed that there was a sign of a wound under the ear, said forensic expert Dr AK Gupta, who submitted his findings to the Calcutta High Court and to the special investigation team (SIT) which was probing into the death of the student in 2022.

"According to the footage of the student's body, there was a lot of blood and sign of a wound under the ear near the jaw which indicates the use of a weapon. The post-mortem examination report indicated that the decomposed body was found two days after his death," Gupta told PTI.

Gupta said he had sent the findings to the SIT and to the Calcutta High Court.

The court had directed the SIT to furnish relevant video clippings and still photographs as sought by Gupta.

PHOTO:X /@BINAMARSAIF

The forensic expert had earlier told the court that to reach a conclusion regarding the sequence of events, he needed to peruse videos and still photos of the uppermost part of the right side of the neck of the deceased.

The court had asked the forensic expert to provide his final opinion on the cause of death on the next date of hearing.

Calcutta High Court, which had ordered exhumation and the second post-mortem of the body of the IIT student, said it was surprised that the first autopsy missed the injury marks on the back of his head. *—PTI*

SIKKIM LANDSLIDE: WORK TO RESTORE CONNECTIVITY ON

GANGTOK, 15 JUNE

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Saturday said it has mobilised huge manpower and machinery to restore road connectivity to North Sikkim.

At least six people have been killed as landslides and heavy rain impacted the Himalayan state severely, damaging properties and disrupting road connectivity, power and food supplies and mobile networks in several areas.

"The BRO under Project SWASTIK has swung into restoration efforts by mobilising huge manpower and machinery to restore connectivity to North Sikkim at the earliest," it said in a statement.

Heavy earth-moving equipment has been deployed on the Dikchu-Sanklang-Toong Road to restore connectivity, with 10km of road already being cleared from the Toong side towards Sanklang, the BRO statement said. Efforts are being made to restore connectivity, it said. *— PTI*

ROW OVER REST HOURS

Kerala seeks Centre's intervention over loco-pilot strike in Palakkad

T'PURAM, 15 JUNE

The Kerala government has sought the immediate intervention of the Centre in the on-going agitation of the loco-running employees in Palakkad Division of the state and said ensuring the safety and efficiency of our railway system should be the top priority.

A section of loco pilots under the banner of All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA), has been striking since 1 June demanding 46 hours of rest, instead of the existing 30 hours.State labour and general education minister V Sivankutty wrote a letter to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Friday saying the "critical issue" should be addressed to restore normalcy by upholding the legal rights of the loco-running employees.In the letter, Sivankutty pointed out that the agitation was in response to the Central Administrative Tribunal and Karnataka High Court rulings, which clearly state that denying daily rest along with weekly rest as per the Railway Act and Rules is 'illegal'.Despite these judicial rulings, the authorities remain adamant in their refusal to grant the statutory rest to loco-running employees, even in situations where train traffic remains unaffected, he said. Such actions seem to be a deliberate attempt to justify the denial of rest, resulting in what can only be described as gross lawlessness and anti-people behaviour," the Kerala Minister said in the letter. *—PTI*

A section of loco pilots under the banner of All India Loco Running Staff Association (AILRSA), has been striking since 1 June *PHOTO: PTI*

Kuwait fire victims' mortal remains reach their homes

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The mortal remains of Dwarikesh Pattanayak, who was among those killed in a devastating fire in Kuwait, were brought back to his native West Bengal and taken to his home in Paschim Medinipur district on Saturday morning.

The body of Pattanayak, who was 52 years old, was received by his family at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport here early in the morning. A pall of gloom descended upon Turka Garh village where hundreds of people waited to have a last glimpse of Pattanayak, who had left his home for Kuwait at an early age of 19 and was working as a mechanical supervisor in the West Asian country.The mortal remains of Denny Karunakaran, one of the 45 Indians killed in a devastating fire in Kuwait, arrived in the city in the early hours of Saturday.

The remains were kept in a mortuary, and the last rites would be performed on Sunday, said his father, Baby Kutty, a resident of Malwani in the western suburbs.

The body of Denny,33, was received by his family at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport around 3.45am. Mortal remains of Md Ali Hussain, who was also killed in the fire was brought to his residence in Ranchi on Saturday.His body was brought to Ranchi on a regular flight from Delhi and was taken to his residence around 10.15am, he said.

Ranchi Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rahul Kumar Sinha was present at the Birsa Munda Airport when Ali's body arrived.

Ali, 24, the youngest among three siblings, went to the west Asian country around 20 days ago, his father Mubarak Hussain,57, said. *—PTI*

ENCOURAGING WRITERS

K Vaishali, 22 others win Sahitya Award

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The Sahitya Akademi on Saturday announced the names of 23 writers, including English writer K Vaishali and Hindi author Gaurav Pandey, who will receive the prestigious Yuva Puraskar across as many languages.

The National Academy of Letters also announced the names of 24 winners of the Bal Sahitya Puraskar for 2024.

"The Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi in its meeting held today under the Chairmanship of its President Sri Madhav Kaushik approved selection of 23 writers who were selected on the basis of recommendations made by the Jury comprising three members each in the concerned language in accordance with the rules and procedure laid down for the purpose," the literary body said in a statement.

The National Academy of Letters also announced the names of 24 winners of the Bal Sahitya Puraskar for 2024 *PHOTO: x*

While K Vaishali will be honoured for her memoir "Homeless: Growing up Lesbian and Dyslexic in India", Gaurav Pandey won the prestigious award for his poetry collection "Smritiyon Ke Beech Ghiri Hai Prithvi".

The Yuva Puraskar has been awarded for 10 poetry books, seven collections of short stories, two collections of articles and one of essays, one novel, one book of ghazals and one memoir.

The other winners of the Yuva Puraskar are Nayanjyoti Sarma (Assamese), Sutapa Chakraborty (Bengali), Self Made Rani Baro (Bodo) and Heena Choudhary (Dogri).

Rinku Rathod (Gujarati), Shruti B R (Kannada), Mohd Ashraf Ziya (Kashmiri), Adwait Salgaonkar (Konkani), Rinki Jha Rishika (Maithili), and Shyamkrishnan R (Malayalam) are also among the winners.

Waikhom Chingkheinganba (Manipuri), Devidas Saudagar (Marathi), Suraj Chapagain (Nepali), Sanjay Kumar Panda (Odia), Randhir (Punjabi), Sonali Sutar (Rajasthani) have also been picked for the Yuva Puruskar.

The other winners are Anjan Karmakar (Santali), Geeta Pradeep Rupani (Sindhi), Lokesh Raghuraman (Tamil), Ramesh Karthik Nayak (Telugu) and Javed Amber Misbahi (Urdu).

Yuva Puraskar awardees will receive a casket containing an engraved copper plaque and a cheque of Rs 50,000 at an awards ceremony later. *—PTI*

DELHI WATER CRISIS

People wait to collect drinking water from a tanker of Delhi Jal Board at a slum in Geeta Colony area, in East Delhi, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTi*

Delhi seeks water on humanitarian grounds from H'yana

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

In view of the water shortage in the national capital, the Delhi government has appealed to Haryana to discharge additional water into the Yamuna on humanitarian grounds, senior AAP leader and minister Atishi said on Saturday.

Delhi's water minister also told a press conference here that the capital is facing a shortage of 70 million gallons per day (MGD) in production due to lack of raw water in the Munak canal and Wazirabad reservoir.

The normal water production of around 1,002 MGD in Delhi went down to 932 MGD on Friday because of lack of raw water, she said.

"The Delhi government has appealed to Haryana to release additional water for the people of the city on humanitarian grounds," the minister said and added that issues related to share of Yamuna water can be discussed after heatwave conditions abate.

She said no solution to the water crisis in Delhi could be found during the meeting of the Upper Yamuna River Board on Friday.

Himachal Pradesh is ready to provide the water that was not used by it to Delhi, she claimed.

"I spoke to Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu on phone and he assured me cooperation," the minister said.

Atishi said the calculation of data on availability of water from Himachal Pradesh is yet to be done by the Board.

In a meeting with Delhi Jal Board officials on Saturday, it was decided that a assessment be done of areas not getting any water and the number of water tankers be increased, she said. Currently, DJB tankers are making around 10,000 trips in water scarce areas supplying 10 MGD of water per day, she said. *—PTI*

Cow vigilante shot at by cattle smugglers in Nuh

GURUGRAM, 15 JUNE

A cow vigilante was allegedly shot at by cattle smugglers in the wee hours of Saturday near Mahu-Chopta village in Haryana's Nuh district, police said.

The victim identified as Sonu Sarpanch, a native of Rewari district, was rushed to a private hospital in Faridabad from where he was referred to Gurugram's Medanta Medicity where he is being treated, they said.

Nuh Superintendent of Police Narendra Bijarnia said the incident took place on the Delhi-Mumbai expressway when the cow vigilantes were chasing a vehicle of cattle smugglers.

Bijarnia said that a First Information (FIR) will be soon registered into the matter as per the complaint.

The victim Sonu is undergoing treatment at Medanta Medicity, he added.

Chaman Khatana, a cow vigilante, said the incident took place around 4.45am on Saturday when a team of seven cow vigilantes chased the pick-up jeep of the cow smugglers.

Khatana said that the smugglers' pick-up jeep overturned on the road near Mau-Chopta village after which they began running away and one was caught by the cow vigilantes. When Sonu caught another, the other cow smugglers opened fire and he got critically injured after getting a bullet shot in his stomach, he added.

After getting information about the incident, the cow vigilantes gathered outside the Medanta hospital. Expressing ire over the incident, they demanded protection for the cow vigilantes.

— PTI

The victim Sonu Sarpanch was a native of Rewari *PHOTO: PTI*

DRUG ABUSE & TRAFFICKING
ANTI NARCOTICS TASK FORCE
JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLICE
SAY NO TO DRUGS
A big YES to life ...
say NO to Drugs
Narcotics Control Bureau
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India
DRUGS TAKE YOU TO HELL DISGUISED AS HEAVEN.
Anti Narcotics Task Force
SAY NO TO DRUGS SAY YES TO LIFE
ANTI NARCOTICS TASK FORCE JAMMU AND KASHMIR

SAY NO TO DRUGS

Senior officials of Anti-Narcotics Task Force of Jammu and Kashmir Police along with locals during an awareness rally ahead of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, in Srinagar on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

Gaza families reminded of war's punishing toll

EID AL-ADHA 2024

After eight months of devastating war between Israel and Hamas, many families will eat canned food in stifling tents. There's hardly any meat or livestock at local markets and no money for holiday treats or presents
PHOTO: ANI

Last summer, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip celebrated the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha the way it's supposed to be: with large family feasts, meat shared with those less fortunate, and new clothes and gifts for children.

But this year, after eight months of devastating war between Israel and Hamas, many families will eat canned food in stifling tents. There's hardly any meat or livestock at local markets, and no money for holiday treats or presents — only war, hunger and misery, with no end in sight.

"There is no Eid this year," said Nadia Hamouda, whose daughter was killed in the war and who fled from her home in northern Gaza months ago and is staying in a tent in the central town of Deir al-Balah. "When we hear the call to prayer, we cry over those we lost and the things we lost, and what has happened to us, and how we used to live before."

Muslims around the world will celebrate the four-day Eid al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice, early in the week. It commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail, as recounted in the Quran. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, Abraham is called to sacrifice his other son, Isaac.

Gaza was impoverished and isolated even before the war, but people still managed to celebrate by hanging up colorful decorations, surprising children with treats and gifts, and purchasing meat or slaughtering livestock to share with those less fortunate.

"It was a real Eid," Hamouda said. "Everyone was happy, including the children."

Now much of Gaza is in ruins and most of the population of 2.3 million Palestinians have fled their homes. After Hamas' surprise attack into Israel on 7 October, in which Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 people and took another 250 hostage, Israel launched a massive air and ground assault.

The war has killed over 37,000 Palestinians, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. It has destroyed most of Gaza's agriculture and food production, leaving people reliant on humanitarian aid that has been held up by Israeli restrictions and the ongoing fighting.

United Nations agencies have warned that over a million people — nearly half the population — could experience the highest level of starvation in the coming weeks.

In early May, Egypt shut down its crossing into the southern Gazan city of Rafah after Israel captured the Palestinian side of it, sealing the only route for people to enter or leave the territory. That means virtually no Palestinians from Gaza will be able to make the annual Hajj pilgrimage that precedes the Eid.

Ashraf Sahwiel, who was among hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled from Gaza City earlier in the war and is also living in a tent, has no idea when or if he'll be able to return.

Abdelsattar al-Batsh said he and his family of seven haven't eaten meat since the war began. A kilogram (2 pounds) of meat costs 200 shekels (around $50). A live sheep, which could be bought for as little as $200 before the war, now costs $1,300 — if it's even available.

"Today, there is only war. No money. No work. Our houses have been destroyed. I have nothing," al-Batsh said.

Iyad al-Bayouk, who owns a now-shuttered cattle farm in southern Gaza, said severe shortages of both livestock and feed due to Israel's blockade have driven up prices. Some local farms have been turned into shelters.

Mohammed Abdel Rahim, who has been sheltering in a building in an empty cattle farm in central Gaza for months, said the farm-turned-shelter was particularly bad in the winter, when it smelled like animals and was infested with bugs. As the heat set in, the ground dried out, making it more bearable, he said.

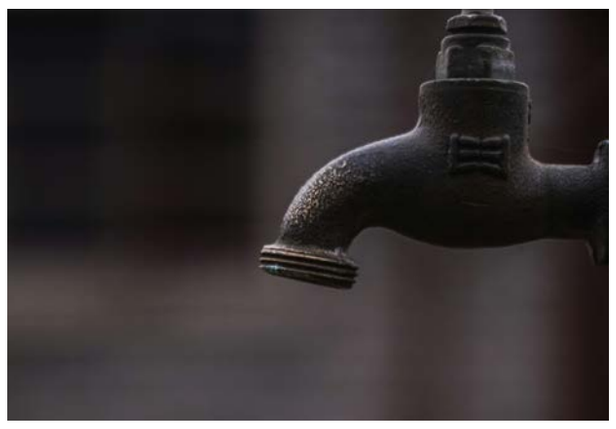
Abdelkarim Motawq, another displaced Palestinian from northern Gaza, used to work in the local meat industry, which did brisk business ahead of the holiday. This year, his family can only afford rice and beans.

"I wish I could work again," he said. "It was a busy season for me, during which I would bring money home and buy food, clothing, nuts, and meat for my children.
—PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

No end in sight for Delhi's water shortage problem



The problems for Delhi's water crisis don't seem to end any time soon as Himachal does U turn
PHOTO: UNSPLASH

The problems for Delhi's ongoing water crisis don't seem to end any time soon. In a major setback for millions of Delhi's underprivileged residents, Himachal Pradesh has now expressed its inability to provide surplus water.

Previously, on 6 June, the hill state had volunteered to quench the national capital's thirst by transferring 137 cusecs [a unit of flow equal to 1 cubic foot per second] of surplus water to Hathnikund barrage in Haryana.

Thereby, the Supreme Court had asked the Haryana government to facilitate the further transfer of water to the neighbouring state of Delhi.

However, this apex court-mandated arrangement of solving Delhi's water crisis has fallen flat. This is because the attorney representing the Himachal government has posted a letter to the Court stating that he was not 'properly apprised of the situation' while committing to help Delhi.

Reacting to this abrupt U-turn manoeuvred by Himachal Pradesh, the Supreme Court bench couldn't hide its irritation and called out the 'casual' manner of operating at inter-state level of governance.

"You do not understand the repercussion of your statement to cover up the earlier statement....made such a casual statement before the Court without understanding the ramifications," a Vacation Bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Prasanna B Varal was quoted by Live Law.

- The Supreme Court had asked the Haryana government to facilitate the further transfer of water to the neighbouring state of Delhi

It further warned the concerned attorney of contempt in case the hill state is being wrongly reported to not have surplus water.

"The officer who has supplied that chart is saying that we have excess water of 137 cusecs and the additional AG was not properly apprised of the situation. Now, you are issuing a letter that 137 is already in the pipeline....

If you have excess water and you are not supplying that excess water, you are in contempt," the Bench added.

Realising the gravity of the situation, Himachal Pradesh's Advocate General — the top lawyer representing the state — offered an apology for the snappy flip flop on the issue.

Meanwhile, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing virtually for the Delhi government, assured the Bench that everything that can be done to end Delhi's water shortage will be done.

Singhvi also suggested that the apex court can appoint a committee to resolve Delhi's water crisis. He also commented that technical proceedings are not a solution to Delhi's imminent water crisis.

"....separate instructions like not washing your car have been issued. Your Lordship may give any other direction; we will be happy to implement it. This is a joint effort."

—Courtesy Downtoearth

In a major setback for millions of Delhi's underprivileged residents, Himachal Pradesh has now expressed its inability to provide surplus water
PHOTO: DTE

Ice Man of Ladakh builds artificial glaciers in the Himalayas

A local inventor is building artificial glaciers in the Himalayas to provide farmers with water for irrigating their crops.

"I remember as a kid, it used to snow a lot, almost as high as my knees," says Dolkar, a 58-year-old potato farmer from Thiksey village in Ladakh. "But now, it doesn't rain or snow so much."

Dolkar hails from generations of potato farmers but has seen her family income dwindle over the years – just like the ice caps on the mountains surrounding her hometown, which lies 19km east of Leh.

"As potato farmers, we used to make up to Rs 70,000 (£700, $892) per month. But now, we make close to Rs 20,000 (£200, $255)."

Receding glaciers

There are 55,000 Himalayan glaciers, encompassing approximately 3 million hectares and representing the largest ice bodies outside the polar caps. However, climate change now threatens to have a severe impact on the fragile Himalayan ecosystem, affecting the economy, ecology and environment of the region. Around a third of the Himalaya's glaciers could vanish by the end of the next century, leading to major changes in Asia's river systems which provide water for about 1.5 billion people. The melting will also impact crop production and the livelihoods of around 129 million farmers who depend on meltwater for these glaciers.

One such region lies in the northern most part of India – Dolkar's home, Ladakh.

In Ladakh, which has a cold and arid climate and minimal annual rainfall of about 86.8mm (3.4in), 80% of the region's farmers depend on the glaciers to irrigate their crops. Over the past 30 years, there has been a significant decrease in snowfall, leading to reduced snow cover and resulting in retreating glaciers, insufficient stream water and severe water shortages in Himalayan villages.

But in Dolkar's village, one local engineer is combatting this glacier crisis using an innovative technique.

Referred to as the "Ice Man of Ladakh", Chewang Norphel has successfully constructed an artificial glacier in Nang, a village near to Thiksey.

As part of his job, Norphel traveled to various villages to address their issues. During those visits he discovered that 80% were farmers who are heavily reliant on water. Glacial meltwater, crucial for farming, only starts flowing in mid-June, while the sowing season begins in April. Due to long winters, the unused meltwater flows into rivers. To conserve this vital resource for the communities, Norphel decided to createNang village is one of them. Located approximately 30km (18.6 miles) from Leh town in the Ladakh region, Nang sits at an altitude of 3,780m (12,402ft) above sea level, and is home to just 334 people. The primary livelihood in Nang is agriculture, with the main crops being potato and wheat.

Ice retaining wall where the water freezes gradually in the winter months and is slowly released in spring when it melts
PHOTO: BBC/KANIKA GUPTA

As with many villages in the region, there is no permanent glacier in Nang and the water supply is fed by natural springs and streams. However, the water is not enough to meet the needs of farmers, especially during the crucial sowing season in April and May. This presents a challenge for agriculture, especially in irrigating fields of wheat, potatoes and other crops during spring, as the glacial melt doesn't occur until summer.

Facing uncertain weather patterns, farmers grappled with the dilemma of planning their agricultural activities for the following year. The unpredictability left them unsure whether to sow for the upcoming season or not. While not planting posed a risk of potential income loss, proceeding with sowing raised concerns about the availability of water resources.

Witnessing the climate impacts his community was facing, 87-year-old Norphel, an engineer and former rural development officer, came up with an innovative technique that prevents farmers from facing a shortfall in their yields and brings glaciers closer to their village.

The ice wall technique

Nang village is nestled under towering mountains, and welcomes its visitors with a board, which points towards Norphel's now-famous artificial glacier.

The glacier is a 30-minute scramble up the region's characteristic mountainsides. Patches of ice start to appear within the first 10 minutes.

Suryanarayanan Balasubramanian is the co-founder of Acres of Ice, a company providing water management solutions, including artificial glaciers. He is working on a PhD on artificial ice reservoirs at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and is currently researching how the ice glacier can lead to increased water conservation.

Farmers in Nang are thankful for the glacier that has improved their access to water significantly.

"Before we had the artificial glacier, getting enough water was hard for us," says Rigzen Wangyal, a 44-year-old farmer from Nang village. "Even though there was a lot of snow, it fell far away. It took a long time to melt, and even longer to come to us. This delay meant our harvests were late, and sometimes our farms became dry because we didn't have enough water."

Local solution to a global problem

Artificial glaciers are a potent water resource management strategy, experts say. While they may not resolve the global glacier melting problem, they can effectively address the challenges faced by numerous communities worldwide that heavily depend on glaciers.

Nepal's International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), an intergovernmental organisation working on climate resiliency in the Himalayas, recently released a report warning policymakers they needed to prepare for the "cascading impacts" of climate change in the region. There will be "grave consequences" for human life, and nature, the report concluded.

—BBC News

Hajj: Muslim pilgrims converge at Mount Arafat

MOUNT ARAFAT, 15 JUNE

Following the footsteps of prophets beneath a burning sun, Muslims from around the world congregated Saturday at a sacred hill in Saudi Arabia for intense, daylong worship and reflection.

The ritual at Mount Arafat, known as the hill of mercy, is considered the peak of the Hajj pilgrimage. It is often the most memorable for pilgrims, who stand shoulder to shoulder, feet to feet, asking God for mercy, blessings, prosperity and good health.

- The ritual at Mount Arafat, known as the hill of mercy, is considered the peak of the Hajj pilgrimage

The mount is about 20 kilometres southeast of Mecca.

Thousands of pilgrims walked to the mount through the predawn darkness. On the slopes of the rocky hill and the surrounding area, many raised their hands in worship with tears streaming down their faces.

"For sure it is something great. It is the best day for Muslims during the year, and the best feeling that anyone can experience," Hussein Mohammed, an Egyptian pilgrim, said as he stood on the rocky slopes at dawn.

"It is the best place for anyone hoping to be (here) on this day and at this moment."

It's believed that Prophet Muhammad delivered his final speech, known as the Farewell Sermon, at the sacred mount 1,435 years ago. In the sermon, the prophet called for equality and unity among Muslims.

Ali Osman, a Spaniard pilgrim, was overwhelmed, as he stepped down the hill of mercy. He said he felt that he gained spiritual and physical strength at the sacred site.

Hajj is one of the largest religious gatherings on earth. The rituals officially started Friday when pilgrims moved from Mecca's Grand Mosque to Mina, a desert plain just outside the city. —*AP*

Water is sprayed on Muslim pilgrims at the rocky hill known as the Mountain of Mercy **PHOTO: AP/PTI**

Peace summit: Zelenskyy seeks show of support

It is the biggest gathering for Ukraine since the full-scale invasion

BURGENSTOCK, 15 JUNE

This weekend, a secluded Swiss resort above Lake Lucerne will be transformed as dozens of world leaders and thousands of soldiers and police descend on Bürgenstock.

The Swiss hope that the Ukraine summit might produce the first tentative sketch marks for a peace process, some 28 months after Russia invaded its neighbour.

It is the biggest gathering for Ukraine since the full-scale invasion. But with key players like China staying away, and Russian President Vladimir Putin issuing a new ultimatum - demanding Ukraine's capitulation and calling that a peace proposal - expectations of significant progress are low.

Russia has not been invited. For Ukraine, the mere fact this meeting is taking place is positive.

Politicians in Kyiv have been hailing every confirmed participant as a gesture of support. For them, the giant summit should demonstrate to Moscow that the world stands on the side of Ukraine - and of international law.

Zelenskyy arrives for the Ukraine peace summit **PHOTO: X/@ZELENSKYYUA**

Ukraine now wants to rally as many countries as possible behind its formula, putting "psychological pressure" on Russia to accept such terms, should it come to that stage. Right now, that looks unlikely.

This summit was first mooted when the situation on the battlefield looked more promising for Kyiv: a prime time to try to shape the terms of any future peace deal. Since then the dynamic has shifted.

"I think the constituency that believes this may not be a war that's winnable for Ukraine is growing," argues Sam Greene of the Centre for European Policy Analysis.

He points to a "significant chunk" of the US foreign policy establishment who believe Ukraine should "cut its losses", as well as the rise in support in Europe for right-wing parties more sympathetic to Moscow.

"I think one thing this event is meant to do, is to galvanise support behind Ukraine's vision of an acceptable outcome," Professor Greene says. But the turnout is less promising than Ukraine and Switzerland once hoped.

Amongst other things, Putin demands Ukraine hand over all four regions that Russia claims to have annexed, including areas that remain under Kyiv's control. Kyiv dismissed that right away as "ludicrous".

Not right now, when neither Ukraine nor Russia is ready to give up the fight. "I think from the Ukrainian perspective, looking at what's going on the frontlines, what they really need is not a commitment to peace, certainly not at any cost," Sam Greene argues, of Kyiv's allies. —*BBC News*

IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

New China rules allow detention of foreigners

BEIJING, 15 JUNE

New maritime rules issued by China that allow its coastguard to detain foreigners for trespassing in the disputed South China Sea have taken effect – but their international legitimacy is being questioned by neighbouring countries.

China claims almost the entirety of the South China Sea, brushing aside competing claims from several Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines and a 2016 ruling by an arbitration tribunal in The Hague, which declared that its stance had no legal basis. The Chinese government has been deploying the country's coastguard and other boats to patrol the waters it claims as its own, and has turned several reefs into militarised artificial islands. In recent years, Chinese and Philippine vessels have had a series of confrontations in disputed areas that have raised fears of a wider conflict.

From Saturday, China's coastguard can detain foreigners "suspected of violating management of border entry and exit", according to the new regulations published online. Detention is allowed for up to 60 days in "complicated cases", they say. "Foreign ships that have illegally entered China's territorial waters and the adjacent waters may be detained."

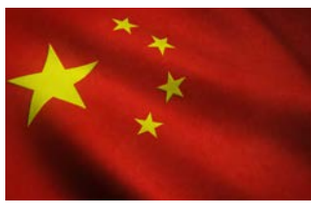


PHOTO: FREEPIK

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr last month called the new rules a "very worrisome" escalation. And on Saturday, the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs announced that it has submitted to the United Nations in New York legal filings asserting its own "maritime entitlement" under the UN maritime rules to an extended continental shelf on parts of the South China Sea, which it refers to as the West Philippines Sea. —*PTI*

US military targets Houthi radar sites in Yemen

The attacks come as the US Navy faces the most intense combat its seen since World War II **PHOTO: AP/PTI**

DUBAI, 15 JUNE

The United States military unleashed a wave of attacks targeting radar sites operated by Yemen's Houthi rebels over their assaults on shipping in the crucial Red Sea corridor, authorities said Saturday, after one merchant sailor went missing following an earlier Houthi strike on a ship.

The attacks come as the US Navy faces the most intense combat its seen since World War II in trying to counter the Houthi campaign — attacks the rebels say are meant to halt the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. However, the Iranian-backed rebel assaults often see the Houthis target ships and sailors who have nothing to do with the war while traffic remains halved through a corridor vital for cargo and energy shipments between Asia, Europe and the Mideast. US strikes destroyed seven radars within Houthi-controlled territory, the military's Central Command said. It did not elaborate on how the sites were destroyed and did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press. "These radars allow the Houthis to target maritime vessels and endanger commercial shipping," Central Command said in a statement.

The U.S. separately destroyed two bomb-laden drone boats in the Red Sea, as well as a drone launched by the Houthis over the waterway, it said. Central Command said one commercial sailor from the Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk cargo carrier Tutor remained missing after an attack Wednesday by the Houthis that used a bomb-carrying drone boat to strike the vessel. —*AP*

10K children in dire need of aid in Gaza

UNICEF spokesman James Elder has described how difficult it has been to not only get aid into Gaza, but also to distribute it across the besieged enclave. "More aid workers have been killed in this war than any war since the advent of the UN," he told. Elder added that on Wednesday, UNICEF had a mission to drive a truck full of nutritional and medical supplies for 10,000 children. Their task was to deliver the aid, which was preapproved by Israeli authorities, from Deir el-Balah to Gaza City. "It took 13 hours and we spent eight of those around checkpoints, arguing around paperwork – was it a truck or a van," he said. —*Al Jazeera*

Cyril Ramaphosa wins 2nd term as S African Prez

JOHANNESBURG, 15 JUNE

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has been re-elected by lawmakers for a second term after his African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance struck a historic deal to form a coalition government by setting aside their rivalry.

Ramaphosa's ANC lost its parliamentary majority for the first time in 30 years in last month's elections. It got 40 per cent of the vote, while the Democratic Alliance (DA) came second with 22 per cent.

The new government of national unity combines Ramaphosa's ANC, the centre-right DA and smaller parties. Ramaphosa, 71, easily won the late Friday vote against Julius Malema, leader of the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Ramaphosa got 283 votes and Malema just 44.

Parliament earlier in the day also elected Thoko Didiza of the ANC as Speaker and Annelie Lotriet of the DA as Deputy Speaker. —*PTI*

Cyril Ramaphosa **PHOTO: AP/PTI**

PRINCESS IS BACK

Princess of Wales Catherine with King Charles III, Prince William poses for a picture after attending Trooping the Color ceremony. She made a return to public for the first time since being diagnosed with cancer **PHOTO: PTI**

KUWAIT LAUNCHES PROBE INTO TRAGIC FIRE THAT KILLED 49

DUBAI/KUWAIT CITY, 15 JUNE

Authorities in Kuwait have launched a crackdown on illegal property extensions in the wake of a devastating fire at a seven-storey building that claimed the lives of 50 people, including 46 Indians, according to a media report on Saturday. Most deaths were due to smoke inhalation while residents in the building were sleeping when the fire broke out early Wednesday in Kuwait's southern city of Mangaf in Ahmadi Governorate. The incident triggered calls for action against real estate landlords and company owners who violate the law to house large numbers of foreign labourers in extremely unsafe conditions to cut costs. The Kuwait Municipality has launched a rigorous crackdown on illegal property extensions.

For years, the illegal conversion of property spaces has been a pervasive issue in Kuwait. Basement parking areas have been transformed into warehouses, while ground-floor open spaces have been converted into housing units and shops, all in the pursuit of additional income. —*PTI*

Holding talks with politicians futile, says Imran

ISLAMABAD, 15 JUNE

Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan said on Friday that holding talks with politicians would be futile if decisions are dictated from elsewhere, Pakistan-based Dawn reported.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan made these remarks while speaking to reporters after hearing in the £190 million corruption case.

He said that PTI was not opposed to political dialogue. He alleged that political parties during previous talks with politicians, facilitated by former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial, said that the "top man" had decided not to participate in elections until his retirement, according to Dawn report.

Imran Khan stressed that lawmakers always seek talks, citing PTI's dialogue with General Pervez Musharraf's representative during his tenure, instead of the government, Dawn reported.

On 13 June, a session court in Islamabad on Thursday acquitted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and senior party leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the Azadi March case, Pakistan-based ARY News reported.

According to details, the judicial magistrate Malik Muhammad Imran announced the reserved verdict and Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rasheed. The court also ordered the acquittal of Sadaqat Abbasi and Ali Nawaz Awan from the Azadi March case. —*ANI*

MAJOR POLITICAL TURMOIL

Sudan's army kills RSF commander

DARFUR, 15 JUNE

Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) launched a major attack on el-Fasher in North Darfur a day after the UN Security Council demanded the militia halt its weeks-long siege of the city.

Sudan's Armed Forces "aborted the attack and inflicted huge losses" with "hundreds" of dead and wounded in the failed RSF assault, it said in a statement. Among those killed was a senior RSF commander, Ali Yagoub Gibril, and the attackers "fled from the battlefield", it added. No response from RSF was immediately available.

The conflict in Sudan broke out in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the RSF, which is loyal to General Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo.

The war has created the worst humanitarian situation, with an estimated 7,56,000 people facing "massive food shortages **PHOTO: X/@NATIONAFRICA**

The violence has killed at least 14,000 people and displaced more than 10 million others, according to UN estimates. The UN and human rights groups have said they fear ethnic cleansing if RSF captures el-Fasher, a city of 1.8 million people and the last army stronghold in the Darfur region.

The war has created the worst humanitarian situation in the world, with an estimated 7,56,000 people in Sudan facing "catastrophic food shortages" by September. In North Darfur, RSF launched repeated attacks that led to the displacement of more than 130,000 people in the past month. Several mass graves have been reported in the state. Dozens of villages have been burned to the ground, mostly of ethnic Zaghawas.

They stood against the army and against the country from day one. They killed civilians and forced them from their homes," he said.

—*Al Jazeera*

Pak announces Rs 10.20 reduction in petrol price

ISLAMABAD, 15 JUNE

In a major relief for inflation-hit masses in cash-strapped Pakistan, the government has slashed the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs 10.20 and Rs 2.33 per litre respectively ahead of the Eid ul Adha festival. The price cut, effective from Saturday, will bring the price of petrol to Rs 258.16 per litre while the price of HSD will be Rs 267.89 per litre, The Express Tribune newspaper quoted a statement from the Prime Minister's Office on Friday. The Finance Division, which usually reviews the fuel prices every 15 days, issued an official notification for the latest price cuts and said the new prices would be applicable for the next fortnight. The notification said that the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) had worked out the consumer prices, based on the price variations in the international market. —*PTI*

Swiss museum removes Van Gogh paintings

BERN, 15 JUNE

One of Switzerland's leading art museums says it will remove five paintings from one of its exhibitions while it investigates whether they were looted by the Nazis. The works - part of a collection at the Kunsthaus Zurich museum - are by some of the world's most acclaimed artists, including Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh. There have long been suspicions about the provenance of works in the Emil Bührle Collection - named after a German-born arms dealer who made his fortune during World War Two by making and selling weapons to the Nazis. The decision to remove the paintings comes following the publication of new guidelines aimed at dealing with the large number of cultural works that have still not been returned to the families they were stolen from. —*PTI*

NASA delays return of Starliner astronauts

NEW YORK, 15 JUNE

Starliner's return to Earth is now delayed to 22 June or later, NASA announced Friday. NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, who embarked on the long-awaited Boeing Starliner mission June 5 and docked at the International Space Station the following day, will have to spend a little more time in orbit than originally planned. Both astronauts were originally set to complete a full assessment of the Starliner on board the ISS in just under a week, but the mission was lengthened due to a need to collect more information about the spacecraft. "We are continuing to understand the capabilities of Starliner to prepare for the long-term goal of having it perform a six-month docked mission at the space station," NASA said. —*UPI*

Taiwan reports Chinese activity near its territory

TAIPEI, 15 JUNE

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) said on Saturday that it detected 12 Chinese military aircraft and eight naval vessels between 6 am (local time) on Friday (June 14) and the same time on Saturday. Of the 12 Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, seven entered the southwest corner of Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), according to the statement shared by Taiwan's MND on X. Following China's action, Taiwan sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed coastal-based missile systems to monitor the PLA activity. Taking to X, Taiwan's MND stated, "12 PLA aircraft and 8 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 am (UTC+8) today. —*PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Windfall tax on crude petroleum slashed to ₹3K/T

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The government has reduced windfall tax on domestically-produced crude oil to Rs 3,250 per tonne from Rs 5,200, with effect from Saturday. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). SAED on export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'. The new rates are effective from June 15, an official notification said. India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks. *—PTI*

Essar sees growth for its IT firm Black Box amid AI boom

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Essar Group sees huge growth potential in its IT firm Black Box with boom in artificial intelligence (AI) technology driving demand for new data centres and managed services across the globe, a top official of the multinational conglomerate said. In an exclusive interview with PTI, Prashant Ruia, director of Essar Capital, which manages the group's portfolio of investment, expressed confidence in the sector. "This is a company which can see tremendous growth, because the kind of growth taking place in data centres and managed services globally is exponential," he said. Black Box, listed on the Indian stock exchanges, has operations spread across 35 countries. "It's obviously listed in India, but it's primarily headquartered, main operations are in the US. We currently do about USD 800 million of revenue in Black Box... about 75 per cent of the market for us is the US. We have a very large operation headquartered in Dallas, we have close to 3,000 people," he said. More than USD 200 billion/year of data centres are getting built in America alone, he said.*—PTI*

CP PLUS tie up with C-DAC (MeitY), for smart technology

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

In a significant leap for indigenous technology and smart solutions, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) has transferred its state-of-the-art Thermal Smart Camera technology to CP PLUS. This groundbreaking technology, developed under the Intelligent Transportation System Endeavor (InTranSE) Program initiated by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), will help further strengthen the core competencies of CP PLUS and will present a notable achievement in India's technological advancements. The Thermal Smart Camera, meticulously designed and developed by C-DAC, is equipped with an in-built Data Processing Unit (DPU) capable of executing various AI-based analytics. *—PTI*

Perplexity, AI startup to upend search business

SAN FRANCISCO, 15 JUNE

The artificial intelligence startup Perplexity AI has raised tens of millions of dollars from the likes of Jeff Bezos and other prominent tech investors for its mission to rival Google in the business of searching for information. But its AI-driven search chatbot is already facing challenges as some news media companies object to its business practices. It is also competing against t ech giants Google, and now Apple, which are increasingly fusing similar AI features into their core products. *—AP*

Forex reserves touch fresh high at $655.8 billion

Gold reserves during the week rose by $481 million

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

India's foreign exchange reserves jumped USD 4.307 billion to touch a new lifetime high of USD 655.817 billion during the week that ended 7 June, official data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

The reserves have been rising on and off for a long time now. So far in 2024, they have risen over USD 30 billion, on a cumulative basis.

According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the biggest component of the forex reserves, rose by USD 3.773 billion to USD 576.337 billion.

Gold reserves during the week rose by USD 481 million to USD 56.982 billion.

India's foreign exchange reserves are now sufficient to cover around 11 months of projected imports, according to a recent RBI report.

In the calendar year 2023, the RBI added about USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange kitty. In 2022, India's forex kitty slumped by USD 71 billion cumulatively.

In 2023, RBI added about USD 58 billion to its foreign exchange kitty *PHOTO: PTI*

Forex reserves, or foreign exchange reserves (FX reserves), are assets that are held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority. It is generally held in reserve currencies, usually the US Dollar and, to a lesser degree, the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling.

The country's foreign exchange reserves last touched their all-time high in October 2021. Much of the decline after that can be attributed to a rise in the cost of imported goods in 2022.

- The relative fall in forex reserves could be linked to the RBI's intervention, from time to time, in the market to defend the uneven depreciation in the rupee against a surging US dollar

Also, the relative fall in forex reserves could be linked to the RBI's intervention, from time to time, in the market to defend the uneven depreciation in the rupee against a surging US dollar.

Typically, the RBI, from time to time, intervenes in the market through liquidity management, including through the sale of dollars, to prevent a steep depreciation in the rupee.

The RBI closely monitors the foreign exchange markets and intervenes only to maintain orderly market conditions by containing excessive volatility in the exchange rate, without reference to any pre-determined target level or band.

—ANI

FOR eMIGRATE USERS

MEA, SBI ink MoU to enhance digital payment services

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the State Bank of India (SBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Saturday to enhance digital payment services for users of the eMigrate portal.

The agreement was signed by Joint Secretary OE and PGE (Overseas Employment and Protector General of Emigrants) Bramha Kumar, on behalf of the Ministry, and Neelesh Dwivedi, General Manager (NW-I) from SBI, at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in Delhi. This MoU will become operational following the successful integration of SBI's payment gateway, SBIePay, with the eMigrate portal.

The integration of SBIePay with the eMigrate portal will allow Indian migrant workers, Recruiting Agents, and other users to make various emigration-related payments with ease. This includes transactions via UPI, credit/debit cards, and NEFT through net banking of all Indian banks, all with no transaction charges.

"Signing of this MoU would further facilitate and enhance the ambit of safe and legal migration of Indian migrant workers". The eMigrate project, was designed to support Indian workers heading to Emigration Check Required countries for employment. By making the emigration process online and transparent, it aimed to simplify and secure the migration experience.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The platform brought together Foreign Employers, registered RAs, and insurance companies offering the Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna on a single platform, promoting seamless and legal migration processes. *—ANI*

The proposed IPO is entirely an offer for sale of 142,194,700 equity shares by Hyundai Motor Company *PHOTO: PTI*

Hyundai Motor India files draft IPO papers with SEBI

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), the Indian arm of South Korean automaker Hyundai, has filed preliminary papers with SEBI to launch an initial public offering (IPO).

The company's IPO, if it goes through, would be the largest in India, surpassing LIC's share-sale of Rs 21,000 crore.

The proposed IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 142,194,700 equity shares by Hyundai Motor Company, with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

In February this year, sources had confirmed that the parent, Hyundai Motor Company is looking to raise at least USD 3 billion (around Rs 25,000 crore) through an IPO. It may dilute 15-20 per cent stake in HMIL to raise funds, the sources added.

Since the public issue is completely an OFS, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the second largest carmaker in India after Maruti Suzuki India, will not receive any proceeds of the IPO.

This development marks a significant milestone for the Indian industry as it will be the first initial share-sale by an automaker in over two decades, following Maruti Suzuki's listing in 2003.

- The proposed IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 142,194,700 equity shares by Hyundai Motor Company, with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus

Earlier this week, electric two-wheeler company Ola Electric received SEBI's clearance to raise funds through an IPO. HMIL commenced operations in India in 1996 and currently sells 13 models across segments.

It reported 7 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales at 63,551 units in May 2024 against 59,601 units in the corresponding month last year. Domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers saw 1 per cent rise to 49,151 units last month from 48,601 units in the year-ago period. Exports grew 31 per cent in May to 14,400 units compared to 11,000 units a year ago. *—PTI*

Auto, Bank sectors to remain positive: Report

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

India's economy is on a positive trajectory with a focus on infrastructure development driving growth, highlights a report "India Strategy" by Prabhudas Lilladher, a stock broking company.

The report noted that after the successful contest in the election and the formation of NDA government at the center, the government will continue its capital expenditure.

The report highlighted that the government will maintain a focus on capex-led growth around PLI, roads, ports, aviation, defense, railways, and green energy, given a 20bps lower fiscal deficit in FY24, normal monsoons, and a Rs 2.1 trillion dividend from RBI.

The fiscal deficit for FY24 stands at 5.6 per cent, providing room for the government to push for growth and populism. The RBI's dividend of Rs 2.1 trillion has further increased the fiscal space, enabling investments in key sectors like green energy, EV, and rural development.

However, the report also highlighted the need for the government to increase its focus on farmers, the rural population, urban poor, and middle class to mitigate the impact of new social engineering cum freebies-led reversals in certain states in recent elections. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Textile exports surge by 9.59% in May despite global challenges

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Despite unfavourable economic conditions in major markets such as the European Union (EU), the US, and West Asian nations, Indian textile exports grew by 9.59 per cent compared to the previous year in May 2024, the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) said in a report.

Simultaneously, Indian apparel exports saw a growth of 9.84 per cent during the same period.

The CITI in its report highlighted that the cumulative exports of textiles and apparel during May 2024 registered a growth of 9.70 per cent over May last year.

The country's overall exports for May 2024 surged to USD 68.29 billion. This was a substantial year-on-year increase of 10.2 per cent, according to data released by the Commerce Ministry on 14 June.

The analysis noted that during Apr -May' 24, Indian textile exports registered a growth of 6.04 per cent over the previous year, while apparel exports registered a growth of 4.46 per cent during the same time period.

Apparel exports saw a growth of 9.84% in May *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

The cumulative exports of textiles and apparel during April-May 2024 saw a surge of 5.34 per cent as compared to the same period last year.

The recently released export data revealed that sectors such as electronic goods, drugs and pharmaceuticals, organic and inorganic chemicals, engineering goods, petroleum products, plastics & linoleum, cotton yarn/fabs made-ups (textiles manufactured), handloom products, etc., man-made yarn/fabs./made-ups, handloom products etc. performed well in the exports from the country.Other merchandise products, such as meat, dairy and poultry products, mica, coal and other ores, minerals including processed minerals, RMG of all textiles, tea, coffee, rice, tobacco, carpet and handicrafts, oil seeds; and fruits and vegetables, did well too. *—ANI*

Google CEO testifies at trial of collapsed startup Ozy Media

CALIFORNIA, 15 JUNE

Google CEO Sundar Pichai testified briefly Friday at the federal financial conspiracy trial surrounding buzz-to-bust startup Ozy Media, countering founder Carlos Watson's alleged claims that the search giant once sought to buy Ozy.

Google did consider hiring Watson for a high-level news executive job in 2021 and putting USD 25 million into Ozy in something of a tradeoff for luring him away, Pichai told jurors.

"Watson was a critical part of Ozy Media, and we were considering making an investment in the company to make the transition easier," he explained. But "did you ever offer to purchase Ozy Media for USD600 million?" prosecutor Dylan Stern asked.

"No," replied Pichai, who heads Google and parent Alphabet Inc.

PHOTO: PTI

He said he had been introduced to Watson at a conference and then in a video interview for a possible Google job interacting with news outlets. Neither the hire nor the USD25 million investment ultimately happened. According to prosecutors, Watson later told another prospective investor that Pichai himself had extended a nine-figure offer to buy Ozy. The Mountain View, California-based company produced TV programs, podcasts and a music-and-ideas festival before falling apart in fall 2021 amid questions about whether it had flagrantly misrepresented its audience reach, deals and finances. *—BBC News*

RISKS INCLUDE GLOBAL SLOWDOWN

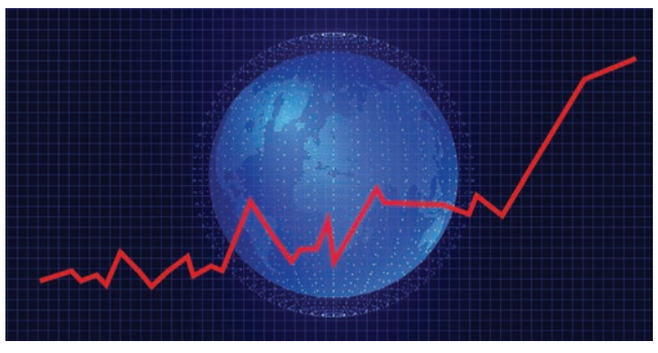
Moody's predicts Sensex at 82,000 in 1 year

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

In a recent report, international rating agency Moody's asserted that the third term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which will end in 2029, will remain India's decade. The rating agency report says the most important aspect of BJP-led New Democratic Alliance (NDA) retaining its majority is its policy predictability.

"The main benefit to the market of the NDA's re-election is policy predictability, which will influence how growth and equity returns pan out in the coming five years. We believe the government is likely to continue focusing on macro stability (i.e., inflation hawkishness) to inform policy," said the report.

The report further added that markets expect more structural reforms in the coming days.



India is likely to drive a fifth of global growth in coming decade *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

"With government continuity now in place, we believe the market can look forward to further structural reforms, giving us more confidence in the earnings cycle. Macro stability with rising GDP growth relative to real rates should extend India's outperformance over emerging markets (EM) equities."

Earlier, the rating agency revised India's GDP upwards to 6.8 per cent for 2024-25, with headline CPI decelerating to about 4.5 per cent for the year. Inflation currently is at 4.75 per cent.

"Our 12-month forward BSE Sensex target is 82,000, implying 14 per cent upside."

India is likely to drive a fifth of global growth in the coming decade. This will be underpinned by increased offshoring of both services and goods, leading to a manufacturing boom, as well as the energy transition and the country's advanced digital infrastructure.

According to the report, the policy reforms of the past decade, including flexible inflation targeting, the GST law, allowing retirement funds to invest in stocks, the bankruptcy code, RERA, and lower corporate tax rates, along with various social reforms and infrastructure buildout have changed the economy's structure for the better. With Modi 3.0 in power, more will come over the next five years in the form of positive structural shifts. *—ANI*

FADA to take up issue of high inventory with SIAM

MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

Automobile retailers' apex body Federation of Automobile Dealers' Association (FADA) on Friday voiced its concern on the high inventory level and said it is planning to take up the matter with the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

At the third edition of the Finance and Insurance Summit 2024 here, FADA President Manish Singhania also demanded continuity in the FAME-3 policy and in infra push.

Singhania said in 2018-19 was a very bad year for the automobile dealers in the country when 280-odd dealerships had gone out of business, and FADA does not want that to happen again.

"We are cautious about the inventory levels because anything above 30 days starts hitting the dealerships. We follow a cycle where the dealer takes funds from banks, which are paid back with interest in 60 days.

PHOTO: PTI

"But the OEMs are increasing this period from 60 to 90 days. While the dealers are getting one month extra, this allows the OEMs to dump more stocks because they will say, you have got three months' time to rotate that inventory at the dealership which was initially two months. That is a cause of worry for us," Singhania told reporters on the sidelines of the event. *—PTI*

UEFA EURO 2024

Germany thrash 10-man Scotland 5-1 in opener

Jamal scored two goals in the first half to give a suitable start for Germans

BERLIN, 15 JUNE

Tournament hosts Germany battered Scotland 5-1 in the opening game of EURO 2024 as a brilliant attacking display bamboozled the 10-player Scots.

The victory was the biggest ever in the opening game of a European Championship tournament. Talk about setting the tone.

Florian Wirtz scored early, then Jamal Musiala soon added a second as Steve Clarke's Scotland couldn't handle the movement of Germany's fluid and youthful forward line, while the experience of Ilkay Gundogan and Toni Kroos proved pivotal in midfield.

After a brief check of the pitch-side monitor by referee Clement Turpin, Ryan Porteous was sent off and a penalty kick was awarded to Germany right on half time to compound Scotland's misery as Arsenal's Kai Havertz slotted home the spot kick to make it 3-0. Germany threatened to add further gloss to the scoreline in the second half as Wirtz, Gundogan, and Antonio Rudiger all went close before substitute Niclas Fullkrug came off the bench and smashed home a beauty to make it 4-0 and then had another disallowed. Scotland did pull one back late on to give their fans something to cheer about as Antonio Rudiger deflected Scott McKenna's header into his own goal. But Germany substitute Emre Can ensured the sensational hosts had the last say as he curled home a beauty in the 93rd minute.

The 5-1 victory puts Germany in firm command of Group A, while Scotland have some serious work to do after a damaging night for their confidence as they froze on the big stage.

When things click for Jamal Musiala he's unstoppable. Scotland found that out the hard way on Friday. The Bayern Munich star scored a stunner, dragged Scotland's defense all over the place, and kept popping up in extremely dangerous positions with his driving runs.

Julian Nagelsmann Says Thumping Of Scotland A 'First Step'

Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said his side understood Friday's 5-1 thumping of Scotland in the Euro 2024 opener was just a "first step" for the tournament hosts. Germany, who have struggled at major tournaments for most of the past decade, blew the Scots off the park. "The team is conscious that this was a first step," said Nagelsmann as Germany eyes a record-breaking fourth European title.

—PTI

Scotland's goalkeeper Angus Gunn, front left, saves the ball from Germany's Florian Wirtz, right, during the Group A match between Germany and Scotland **PHOTO: X / @EURO2024**

Switzerland beats Hungary 3-1

LONDON, 15 JUNE

Switzerland began their Euro 2024 campaign in style with a 3-1 Group A victory over tournament dark horses Hungary with Kwadwo Duah, Michel Aebischer, and Breel Embolo all on target on Saturday.

Kwadwo Duah and Michel Aebischer put the Swiss into a commanding, and deserved, two-goal at half-time against a Hungary side struggling to retain possession. But the second half saw an improvement from the Hungarians and, at the second time of asking, pulled one back from Barnabas Varga to set up a thrilling finale.

—AP

Switzerland's Kwadwo Duah and Michel Aebische **PHOTO: @EURO2024**

England's Harry Kane practices during a training session ***PHOTO: @HKANE***

Battle of nerves: England faces Serbia in Group C

GELSENKIRCHEN, 15 JUNE

England is among the favorites to win the European Championship and end its long wait for a first major trophy since the 1966 World Cup. Gareth Southgate's team begins its campaign against Serbia in Group C on Sunday.

There are concerns about potential fan violence. Police have deemed the game "high risk," and beer sales at the stadium will be low-alcohol only. Kickoff is at 9 p.m. local time (1900 GMT) on Sunday.

England's hopes could rest on Jude Bellingham, who has just completed a dream debut season at Real Madrid after winning the Spanish title and Champions League.

Serbia striker Aleksandar Mitrovic is coming off an outstanding first season in Saudi Arabia with Al-Hilal, where he won a league and cup double beating Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr to the title.

This could be Southgate's final tournament in charge of England, with his contract due to expire after the Euros. He led his team to the semifinals of the World Cup in 2018 and the final of the Euros but admits failure to win a trophy this time would likely end his reign.

The fitness of John Stones has been a focal point, not least because England had to leave defensive stalwart Harry Maguire out of the squad because of a calf injury. Stones missed training through illness earlier in the week but was back on Thursday. Southgate could play Liverpool right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold as a holding midfielder alongside Declan Rice. way.

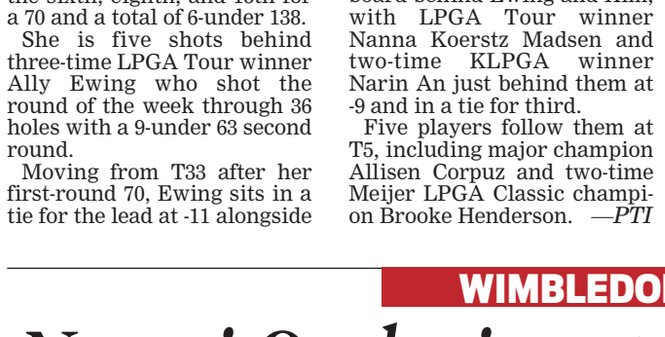
—AP

PHOTO: PTI

Women's T20 WC: fitness of Jemimah, Pooja in focus

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

India and South Africa will be eager to achieve different goals with the broader picture of the Women's T20 World Cup hanging in the backdrop when they begin a three-week long all-format series with the first ODI here on Sunday. Fitness of Jemimah, Pooja under scanner India will also keep an eye on the fitness of top-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues, who had missed the series against Bangladesh with a back injury In the year of T20 WC, the 50-over matches might look a bit incongruous but they are significant for the two teams looking to hit a busy road to the ICC showpiece, to be hosted by Bangladesh in October, on a winning note, and gain momentum. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side, which had lost the ODI and T20I series against Australia at home this January, came roaring back, blanking Bangladesh 5-0 in a recent away T20I series and the hosts would like to build on it further. Head coach Amol termed the result as a vital stepping stone in their preparation along with the target-oriented camps in Bengaluru and Mumbai. Match starts at 1.30 PM.—*PTI*



Sailboats at the start of the 85th "Bol d'Or" sailing race on Lake Geneva, in Geneva, Switzerland on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Aditi is T-16 on the LPGA at Meijer Classic

BELMONT, 15 JUNE

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded two under 70 to be placed Tied-16th at the halfway stage of the Meijer LPGA Classic, here.

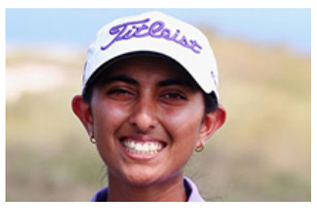
The Bengaluru player, who is enduring an average season, is due to play her third Olympic Games in August and a return to form will be a relief.

Still, without a top-10 finish in 2024, Aditi had a bogey start but made up with birdies on the sixth, eighth, and 18th for a 70 and a total of 6-under 138.

She is five shots behind three-time LPGA Tour winner Ally Ewing who shot the round of the week through 36 holes with a 9-under 63 second round.

Moving from T33 after her first-round 70, Ewing sits in a tie for the lead at -11 alongside young Aussie star Grace Kim, who went 68-65 in rounds one and two to put herself in prime position heading into Moving Day. It is a stacked leaderboard behind Ewing and Kim, with LPGA Tour winner Nanna Koerstz Madsen and two-time KLPGA winner Narin An just behind them at -9 and in a tie for third.

Five players follow them at T5, including major champion Allisen Corpuz and two-time Meijer LPGA Classic champion Brooke Henderson. *—PTI*



Aditi Ashok **PHOTO: PTI**

Kevin Campbell dies aged 54

LONDON, 15 JUNE

Former Arsenal and Everton striker Kevin Campbell dies aged 54. The news follows two weeks after Campbell was reported to be in the hospital due to a serious illness.

"We are devastated to learn that our former striker Kevin Campbell has died after a short illness. Kevin was adored by everyone at the club. All of us are thinking of his friends and family at this difficult time. Rest in peace, Kevin," read the statement released on Saturday by Arsenal.

—AP

Indian men's archery team qualifies as top seed in Final Olympic Qualifier

ANTALYA, 15 JUNE

Indian men's recurve archery team of Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara, and Pravin Jadhav entered the 24-team elimination round as the top seed in the Final Olympic Qualifier here on Saturday.

The trio shot a total of 2018 points to claim the pole position in the leaderboard ahead of Chinese Taipei (2008) and Germany (1998). The top 24 cut the elimination round which is a draw of 32. A total of 46 teams competed.

By finishing on top, India got a bye into the last-16 where they will face 17th seed Luxembourg.

The top three ranked nations in the elimination round will get the Paris Olympic quota places in the men's recurve team event.

Archery team **PHOTO: PTI**

India will get their quota upgraded to team quota should they finish in the top three.

Dhiraj had bagged the individual quota earlier.

Meanwhile, the Indian women's recurve team of Deepika Kumari, Bhajan Kaur, and Ankita Bhakat on Friday failed to get the quota after suffering a shock 3-5 loss to lower-ranked Ukraine in the pre-quarterfinals.

The women's team can still qualify based on their rankings ahead of the Paris Olympics cut-off date.

—PTI

Australia wary of Scotland threat; Pak take on Ireland

GROS ISLET, 15 JUNE

A rampant Australia will be wary of Scotland's threat when the two teams clash in a crucial Group B encounter in the T20 World Cup here with the outcome set to influence Super Eight qualification.

With Australia having already booked one spot for the Super Eight from Group B, Scotland and England are in the race for the second position. Scotland will go through if they beat Australia or even if their contest is washed out, but in case of a defeat to the Mitchell Marsh-led side and England winning against Namibia hours earlier, the Scot would miss the bus.

For England, a win over Namibia is a must and if the Australians do them a favour by beating Scotland, chances will only brighten up.

A washout in the England-Namibia game in the same group will see Scotland go through.

match starts at 6:00 am IST.

Pakistan eye consolatory win over Ireland but rain threat looms

PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Babar Azam's Pakistan will look to restore some pride when they take on an under-firing Ireland in their final Group A match at Lauderhill in Florida on Sunday.

With arch-rivals India and the USA sealing the two spots for the Super Eight stage from Group A, Pakistan has been confined to some introspection and relook at their T20 game.

But before all that, Babar's side will have to first thwart the Irish challenge. Ireland had beaten Pakistan comprehensively in a bilateral game in days leading to the T20 World Cup and the contest — if at all it happens — could see both the teams in green fighting hard for a final laugh.

But all that will come to the fore only if the rain stays away to allow play to happen as Florida has witnessed a flood-like station amid heavy downpours in the last few days. Co-hosts USA's unexpected qualification happened only after their contest here against Ireland was washed out, which had also ensured Pakistan's exit in the first round.

Match starts at 8:00 pm IST.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Veteran sports journalist Harpal Singh passes away

NEW DELHI, 15 JUNE

Veteran sports journalist Harpal Singh Bedi, who covered several highs and lows of Indian sports in a career spanning over four decades, served as the national Olympic contingent's press attache in 2012 and charmed the media box with his inimitable wit and warmth, died after prolonged illness here on Saturday. He was 72 and is survived by his wife Revathi and daughter Pallavi. The former sports editor of the United News of India (UNI) was among the tallest figures in Indian sports journalism and was working as a consulting editor of the Statesman newspaper for the last couple of years.—*PTI*

WIMBLEDON WARM-UP

Naomi Osaka is out after losing a thriller

PARIS, 15 JUNE

Former world number one Naomi Osaka was dumped out of the 's-Hertogenbosch grass-court tournament in a deciding tie-break thriller on Friday, ending an encouraging run on the surface ahead of Wimbledon.

A battling performance by Canadian Bianca Andreescu, ranked a lowly 228 in the world, took her into the semi-finals with a 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7-3) victory over the four-time Grand Slam champion.

Andreescu will next face Dalma Galfi from Hungary for a place in Sunday's final, with the draw opening up after the defeat of top seed Jessica Pegula.

"For me today it was just about trying my best to stay in the present moment. She has a great serve, my focus was just to get the ball back into the court on return," Andreescu said after the match.

"Staying mentally tough was key today."

Two lengthy rain breaks meant both players struggled for consistency early in the match, which went on serve until the seventh game when Andreescu seized the initiative.

A powerful return down the line and an Osaka error handed the Canadian a break, which she backed up with a love service game marked by a string of mistakes from the Japanese player.

Andreescu managed to serve out the first set 6-4 in 40 minutes, cleverly breaking up Osaka's rhythm with heavily sliced drop shots.

But the Japanese hit back instantly in the second set, breaking Andreescu's first service game with a sweet crosscourt forehand drive on break point and racing to a 3-0 lead.

An Andreescu double fault gifted her opponent the double break and Osaka closed out the second set 6-3 with a service winner.

The only previous match between the pair was a nail-biting three-setter in Beijing in 2019 and the third set was also closely fought.

A fired-up Andreescu broke Osaka's serve in the sixth game, wowing the crowd with some outstanding retrieving and inventive spins.

She served for the match, but Osaka battled back with a break of her own, taking the contest into a final set tie-break. Both women had their chances in the shoot-out, but Andreescu held her nerve better, Osaka making several unforced errors including on match point, as she dumped a backhand into the net.

Osaka has never played her best tennis on grass, her four Grand Slam victories have come on the hard courts at the US and Australian Open.

—AP

Naomi Osaka ***PHOTO: X / @NAOMIOSAKA***

HI names 40-member core probable group

BENGALURU, 15 JUNE

Hockey India On Saturday announced a 40-player core probable group for a 63-day junior men's national coaching camp to be held at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) from 16 June.

This camp follows the Indian junior men's team's European tour, where it played five matches from May 20-29 against Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands club team Bredase Hockey Vereniging Push.

During the tour, India secured a 2-2 (4-2 SO) win against Belgium in their first game but lost 2-3 in the second match against the same opponent. They faced a narrow 5-4 defeat against Bredase Hockey Vereniging.

Against Germany, India was defeated 2-3 in the first game but won 1-1 (3-1 SO) in the return match, which was also the final game of the tour.

The upcoming camp, led by coach Janardhana CB and overseen by HI's high-performance director Herman Kruis, will end on August 18.

Janardhana said, "We have a talented group of players and the intensive training sessions will help them reach their full potential. Our goal is to develop a cohesive and formidable team ready to take on any challenge."

—PTI

Men's national coaching camp **PHOTO: PTI**